



TIM CHAPMAN / Miami Herald Staff

Blood-spotted bulletproof vest and revolver on street are somber reminders.

There is also a ponderous ritual to investigation: light-blue van and hauled off to the medical examiner. The more victims, the longer it takes. On Friday the dead men lay where they fell for four hours.

Finally the killers were placed in the back of a

The agents were taken away in separate hearses.

The color of death was jet black.



a battle between FBI agents and two robbery suspects.

MARY LOU FOY / Miami Herald Staff



Metro-Dade officers and paramedics rush an injured FBI agent to an ambulance.

ALBERT COVA / Miami Herald

On _____ page, name of
newspaper, city and state.)

SUN SENTINEL

Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.
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2 agents, 2 suspects killed in ferocious Dade gunfight

By Katie Springer and Jack Breanen

Staff Writers

MIAMI — A ferocious gunbattle between a squad of FBI agents and a pair of suspected bank robbers Friday turned into the bloodiest fight in the bureau's history, leaving two agents and the suspects dead and five other FBI men wounded.

"It's the first time we've had two agents killed and so many injured. It's been just a devastating day for the FBI," said Joseph Corless, special agent in charge of the Miami FBI.

Gunfire erupted about 9:30 a.m. after agents closed in on the suspects in Kendall, an unincorporated area of 100,000 residents south of Miami.

"I thought it was a drug deal that went bad, because that's what everyone does down here," said Diane Parker, 24, who said she saw the entire battle. "Then I thought it was a Miami Vice episode, but then I saw the blood and dead guys and thought, 'No way.'"

The slain agents were identified as Benjamin T. Grogan, 53, a 25-year FBI veteran, and Jerry Dove, 36, a agent since 1979. It was the first time since 1979

that two FBI agents were killed in a single incident.

For hours, police cordoned off a two-block area where five battered cars, spent ammunition shells, bloody clothing and bulletproof vests lay scattered. At least two of the cars were riddled with bullet holes.

Witnesses said shots were exchanged for about 10 minutes as motorists continued to drive along the street, oblivious to the danger.

"People drove through the exchange of gunfire," said Billie Holloway, 43, who was watering her flowers when she heard shots ring out. "People got out of the Farm Store and drove through this. This is Miami. People are crazy."

The shooting began after the agents sighted a car they thought had been involved in a series of recent bank and armored car robberies in the area.

The agents radioed for support agents and then went after the black Monte Carlo, Corless said.

"Apparently when they believed they had sufficient assistance, an attempt was made to pull this vehicle over. At that point a confrontation ensued [and] shots fired," said SHOOTOUT, 9A.

Continued from page 1A

was fired. "Definitely," said Special Agents Corcoran, McNeilly, and 15-year veteran, and James McNeilly, 43, with the FBI since 1968, were both listed in serious but stable condition with gunshot wounds at Baptist Hospital, Corcoran said.

McNeilly was shot in the chest and hand and Hanlon was shot in the thigh and hand, a hospital spokesman said.

"Fortunately, they were brought here in a timely fashion . . . neither has any life-threatening injuries," said Dr. Gerald Young, a trauma surgeon at Baptist Hospital.

Edmundo Mireles Jr., 33, an agent since September 1979, was listed in serious condition at South Miami Hospital with a fractured arm, Corcoran said.

"It looks like he will be OK, but he's going to require some substantial therapy on the arm," said hospital spokesman Bob Abdellah.

Two other agents, Richard A. Mazzetti, 43, and Gilbert M. Granitz, 27, were treated for minor injuries and released from Jackson Memorial Hospital.

FBI officials would not release the hometowns of the injured or dead agents.

"In all, there were eight FBI agents at the scene when the shooting erupted, but only one escaped unharmed," FBI officials said. The eighth agent was not identified.

In Washington, D.C., FBI Director William H. Webster identified the dead suspects as Michael Platt, 32, and William R. Matrix. He said the FBI had no other information about the pair.

There are no known leads for anyone other than the two [suspects] who were killed in the shooting incident," Webster said at a news conference.

Webster said, however, that the suspects "were two particularly violent individuals who did not shoot out of excitement or fear but that it was part of their modus operandi."

"Today's tragedy is a severely felt loss to the FBI," he said. "As in law enforcement everywhere, dedicated men and women put their lives on the line each day for all of us. This is a violent world, but it would be much worse without their fidelity, their bravery and their integrity."

Agents were fired as the agents chased the suspects for about 40 blocks along a side street that parallels U.S. 1. The robbers finally pulled into a driveway and crashed into a tree, witnesses said. One FBI car crashed into a wall, two of them striking trees. They [the passengers] immediately took a couple of shots at the

front of the scene. "It was a hellacious amount of fire. It ran [sic] out of a pistol or rifle range," he said.

Deputies, FBI agents, Metro-Dade and Miami police officers responded to the area after the shooting.

Witnesses said it appeared that the federal agents had their fire while the cars passed over them and their targets.

"All I heard was the shots. There must've been 100 rounds fired. They were shooting for 10 minutes," said Mario Tepiro, who was unloading a truck at an office complex near the scene.

"It went on and on and on," said Charlie Davis, who lives nearby.

FBI and Metro-Dade police officers were checking license plates in the area where they made upon the stolen car, which they had linked to several armored car robberies and bank robberies over the past year.

"We think that these people were the prime suspects in those robberies," Corcoran said.

Metro-Dade police spokesman Al Carballosa said the robbers, sought since October, were known to be extremely violent.

"In the holdup, the group would wait for the guards and just shoot them. They were ruthless," he said.

FBI officials said they had no reason to think that any other people were involved in the shoot-out, despite earlier reports that police had issued a bulletin for a white van.

The last time two agents were killed in a single incident was in August 1979, when a former social worker broke into the FBI office in El Centro, Calif., and gunned down two agents. He then committed suicide after being wounded by a dying agent.

There are about 300 special agents in Broward, Palm Beach, Dade and Monroe counties. Dove and Grogan are thought to have been the first agents killed in the line of duty in South Florida.

By midafternoon, the flag at FBI headquarters in Miami was flying at half-staff. The agents' deaths were also mourned in Washington.

Attorney General Edwin Meese III called the incident "a terrible reminder of the dangers and risks that agents of the FBI face every day."

"As attorney general I know I speak for everyone in the law enforcement community when I say the bravery and dedication of these fine men will not be forgotten," he said.

At the scene, agents found short-hand, "Makarov" and at least one automatic weapon that belonged to the suspects, officials said. An hour

later, Staff Writers John Flanigan and Michael Connolly photographed

'I heard a crash — then all the gunshots'

By John Platner

Staff Writer

MIAMI — For nearly 10 minutes Friday, the peaceful country community of Kendall took on the air of the Depression-era 1930s, when FBI agents gained their fame in savage gunfights with the likes of notorious bank robbers Ma Barker and John Dillinger.

— And after what one witness said "must have been 100 shots fired," the street was littered with spent shells, weapons, bloodstains, pieces of clothing, a bulletproof vest, wrecked vehicles and First-Aid remnants left by paramedics, who treated wounded FBI agents before they were flown or driven to nearby hospitals.

What began Friday morning as surveillance mission ended with a shoot-out that claimed the lives of two FBI agents and two suspects and left three other agents hospitalized with serious gunshot wounds and two agents grazed by gunfire.

"This is a real quiet neighborhood," said resident Bill Norman, as he stared at four bodies lying on the east side of 82nd Avenue, a few feet south of Southwest 123rd Street. "Well, it was," he said.

Two blocks to the north of the gunfight, it was business as usual at Sunniland Shopping Center.

"I was watering the plants," said Billy Holloway, 43, a witness to the shootout that occurred about 9:30 a.m. "I heard a crash and then all the gunshots. It was unbelievable. I ran out to the street. There were two people, one on each side of the street, shooting toward the trees."

Miraculously, no bystanders were hit although several vehicles drove by as the agents and suspects exchanged gunfire.

"I called 911 and asked them to send police to block off the street before someone got shot driving by," said Bob Stebbins, 44, Holloway's fiance. "There was one hell of half of bullets."

Stebbins, a financial planner, marveled that one FBI agent firing while crouched by his car on the west side of the street would raise his weapon each time a car drove by. He estimated 10 to 12 cars drove through the gunfire untouched.

"I don't know what the bad guys [on the other side] were doing," he said.

Estimates were that perhaps 150 rounds were fired from revolvers, shotguns and automatic weapons.

The fatal shootout, however, began about 10 blocks south. Authorities would not say exactly where, but it was thought to have been in the vicinity of Barnett Bank on U.S. 1 and Southwest 138th Street that had recently been robbed. Three armored cars and another bank were also robbed in the area in recent months.

An FBI surveillance team following an agent's hunch that bank robbers usually strike on Fridays sighted a stolen car carrying two suspects and gave chase.

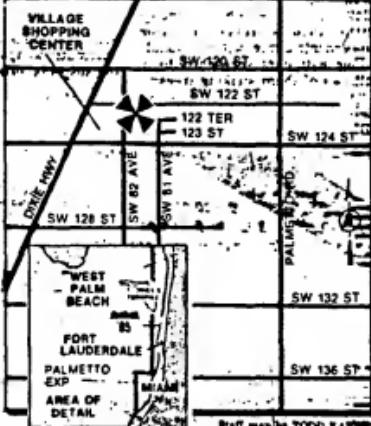
— "It was a logical day" to look for potential holdups, said Joseph Corless, special agent in charge of the Miami FBI office. It was Friday, the day when heavy pickups and deliveries are made by armored cars and banks have large sums of currency on hand to cash payroll checks.

The FBI's Corless said that authorities also had the identities of possible suspects as well as the license number of a stolen car used in an earlier robbery.

When two agents on surveillance saw the suspect Monte Carlo and verified the vehicle was stolen, they radioed for backup support and stayed in pursuit.

As the suspects travelled north on 82nd Avenue, the agents attempted to stop them around 133rd Street. "I thought a bunch of firecrackers had gone off, but

LOCATION OF SHOOTOUT



then I heard the shotguns," said Norman, who was remodeling his home on 134th Street. "Then I heard automatic firing again and then the shotgun."

The cars raced north, the drivers ignoring a ~~white~~ way stop sign and a red traffic light, until they veered off the right side of the road and stopped side-by-side in a multicar parking area in front of a one-story home. Both vehicles appeared to have struck the same bottle brush tree but were not badly damaged. —

Immediately behind, another FBI car screeched to a halt.

Still another federal car, whose driver may have lost control, veered to his left and struck a tree in front of an electrical power substation on the opposite side of the street.

A fourth government car spun 90 degrees so that it faced the suspect's vehicle.

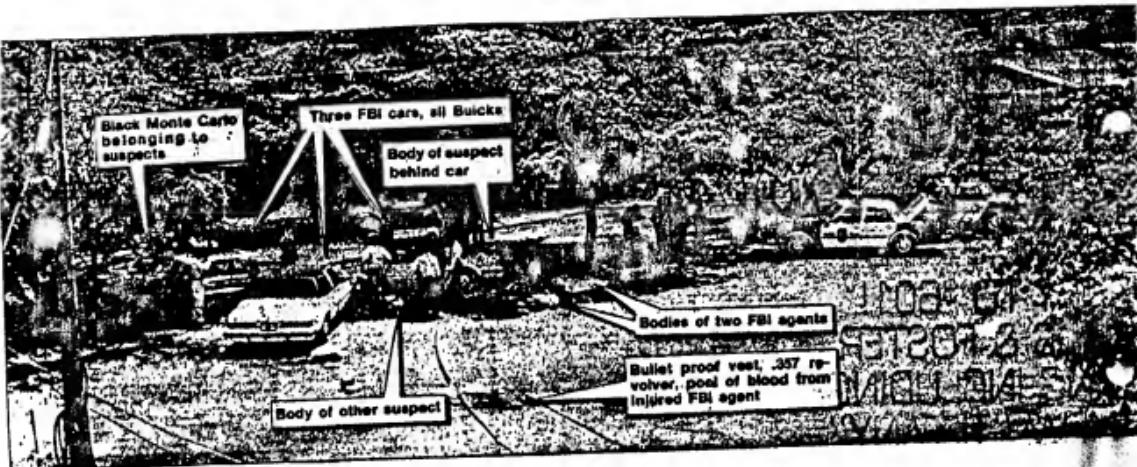
"[An FBI agent] jumped out and got behind his car and started shooting," Stebbins said. "I saw him fall and the agent who was crouched by his car."

At least two of the FBI cars had been struck by bullets. The rear door windows of one had been shot away. Bullets had raked the front fender. Across the street, a row of fresh bullet holes lined a cement wall that protects an office and small shop complex. Spabbis said the shooting continued in sports. "It would stop and then it would start again."

He said the sporadic gunfire went on for about 10 minutes and after Metro-Dade and Miami police officers had arrived.

Throughout the day, police kept bystanders and the media at a distance. Fellow officers covered the two slain FBI agents with yellow plastic sheets, but left the suspects' bodies in the open. When a gentle breeze blew the sheet off one of the slain officers, a fellow

When the medical examiner looked at the fallen officer holding plastic sheets between them stood up to block the scene from onlookers and photographers gathered across the street on the second floor of a parking garage.

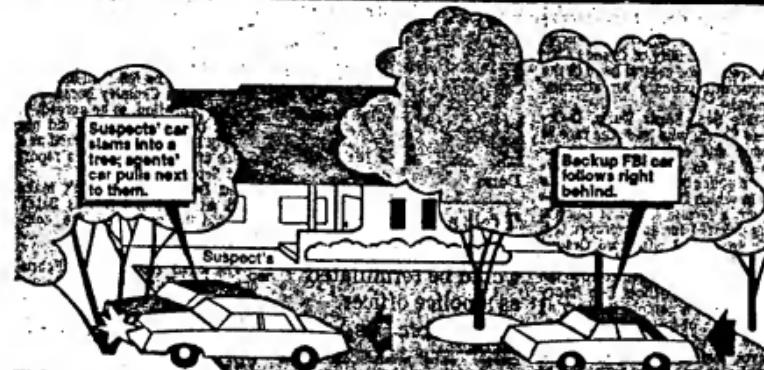


SHOOT-OUT IN KENDALL

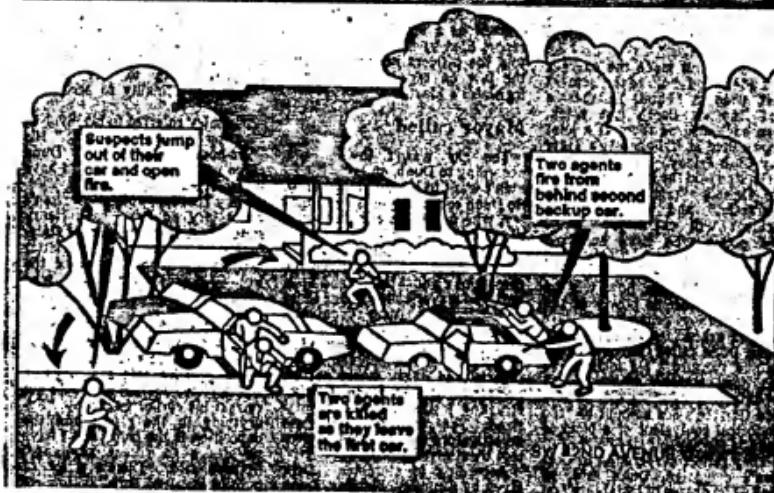
Friday's wild gun battle was the result of an FBI and Metro-Dade police investigation of bank and armored car robberies. Two agents searching for the robbers Friday morning spotted them casing a South Dade bank,

followed them on South Dade Highway, radioed for help, and chased their Monte Carlo onto a side street. This is an artist's rendering of the shoot-out that followed.

THE CHASE ENDS ON A RESIDENTIAL STREET



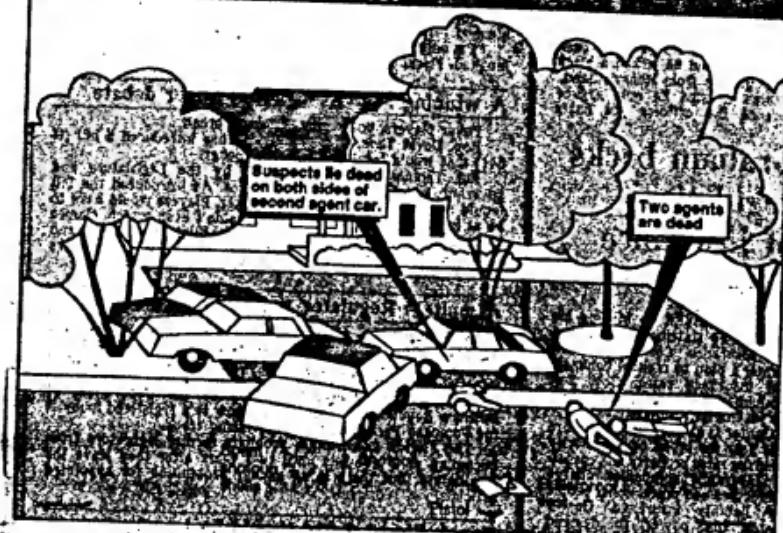
THE GUN BATTLE BEGINS AND TWO AGENTS KILLED



SUPPORT AGENTS ARRIVE ON THE SCENE



THE AFTERMATH OF THE SHOOT-OUT



PHILL PLAMONDON William Marshall

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state)

THE MIAMI HERALD
Miami, Florida

Page 1A
Date: April 12, 1986

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Fatal ride recorded on tape

'People down!' sounded alarm

This is a transcript of FBI radio transmission leading up to Friday's shoot-out that killed two FBI agents and two robbery suspects and wounded five other agents:

Agent: Try and keep a weak eye also on that bank just north of the one, your primary location, that Consolidated. It's just 100 feet away.

Gordo, do you have any kind of feel for a schedule of armored vehicles down this way, what time they're going to arrive and when?

No, we didn't check with them. Steve W., do you have anything on that?

Negative, I (unintelligible) give them a call.

The only one would possibly be that one on 138th there, where I think he makes a delivery shortly after 9 o'clock. That's all we got, though.

OK.

★ ★ ★

Agent: We're probably gonna all be in the position here if something does go down. If they pull up and move in quick and we don't have a chance to respond before, we're probably going to have to wait for a situation where these guys exit. What do you think?

Agent: responding: Oh yeah, 16-4. If they get in position to do something we better get them finish up.

★ ★ ★

Attention all units. We're behind a black vehicle, two-door, Florida license NPJ-881. We're headed... north on South Dixie...

OK, where?

124th Street. It's black Monte Carlo, two males in it. NPJ-881.

(Unintelligible) Metro right away and let's try and yeah that.

Now, let's get him yakked. Let's. Get, uh, Bill S., call Metro on your

Please turn to TAPE 22A

Fatal ride recorded on tape; agents asked for backups

TAPE / from TA

unit and give them the location. Are you on one-two-four or are you north of there now?

We're looking good, NPF-891, 120th Street, let's get up here and let's stop him if we have to.

OK, hold on Ben until we get enough people up there.

Alright. Blow up here.

Two white males in the vehicle, one with a mustache.

(Unintelligible) tell them till we can get some help and then let's see if they stop.

(Unintelligible) that's the plate isn't it, NPF-891? They're making a right turn on 117th, right on 117th.

Give pursuit guys.

Southwest 81st Road, heading south again.

You get Metro?

We're right behind you, babe, give me a cross street.

Stand by.

What's your location, Ben?

(Unintelligible) right turn, on 120th Street going west.

Ben, we're right behind you baby, wanna do it? Let's do it.

Let's get some marked units. Let's get some ...

Okay, we're at about 120th and U.S. 1. Are they coming back toward U.S. 1?

That's affirmative.

Just looked at them. There are

guys holding up something in the front.

Let's do it. Take 'em. (Unintelligible) let's do it.

Check?

Yeah.

(Pause)

Location, location. Still on one-two-zero?

One-two-zero east of the highway.

(Transmissions from the two agents who were killed ended at this point.)

What's your location?

Location?

The last I heard him say, he was on one-two-zero east of the highway a couple blocks.

Roger.

OK, as you come up there, it's ... are you reading me, Red Man? Yeah, go ahead. (Sirens in background.)

(Unintelligible) up there, so take it easy coming up.

(Pause.)

People down! ... We got people down! Let's get some help over here!

That you one-thirty-one? Give us a read-out on the scene.

Four people down here!

Where are you? Give me a location.

(Unintelligible) as both '64s at once) ... wind up crashing in there.

Now, what's going on?

(Sirens)

To those units out in there, are you requesting Metro's assistance?

Where's the action going on? Tell me.

New location?

(Unintelligible) on, uh, eight-two Avenue ... behind the Sunland Shopping Center.

Roger that.

(Pause)

Would the units out there repeat a location, please?

(Pause)

Will somebody throw in a location?

(Pause)

No officer ... (in background) We got the bad guys!

Units out there Southwest, give a status report, please.

All right, we've got some of our guys down, we need the ambulances in here off of, ah, 124th Street.

Eight-two Avenue.

124th south on eight-two Avenue, from 124th Street.

Ten-four.

Seven-seven to three hundred, emergency!

Go ahead, seven-sevens.

Notify the SAC [Special Agent in Charge] we have two or three agents who have been shot.

So far both of the bad guys are DOA. I'm afraid we've lost two agents also.

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state)

THE MIAMI HERALD

Miami, Florida

Page 1A

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Wounded agent credited with shooting two gunmen

By BRIAN DUFFY and JEFF LEEN

Broward Staff Writers

As his fellow FBI agents lay bleeding and dying around him and two suspected bank robbers tried to get away in an FBI car, Special Agent Ed Mireles, wounded badly in the left arm, crawled about seven yards to the driver's side door, stood up, steadied himself and emptied his revolver through the open window. At the two men in the car lay dying.

Mireles sank to the ground, bleeding. Police sirens screamed in the distance. The worst massacre in the history of the FBI was over.

"The bad guys thought all the agents were down, and they were getting ready to leave," an investigator, who is trying to recreate the shooting scene, said

Please turn to SHOOT-OUT / 6A

Surviving agent shot two killers despite wounds

SHOOT-OUT /from JA

Saturday. "Somehow, Mireles got to the car, I don't know how. He killed them both with his revolver."

The agent's heroism was one of the few bright spots in a tragedy that left two agents and the two suspected bank robbers dead and five other agents wounded Friday in a hall of automatic weapons fire on a quiet, tree-lined Kendall street.

No passers-by were wounded in the shooting, largely because the FBI agents waited to make the arrest until they were on a side street and held their fire when motorists got in the way.

On Saturday, Metro-Dade detectives and FBI agents were sorting through ballistics reports, witnesses' statements and a pile of confusing physical evidence while others sought to comfort the friends and family of the victims.

President Reagan telephoned Sandra Grogan, the widow of special agent Benjamin Grogan, and Patricia Dove, the mother of slain agent Gerald Dove.

FBI spokesman Paul Miller reported that agents Gordon McNeill, 43, and John Hanlon, 48, were in serious but stable condition at Baptist Hospital. Mireles, 33, who was wounded by a bullet in the left forearm, also was said to be in serious but stable condition Saturday at South Miami Hospital.

A team of investigators from the FBI's Washington, D.C. headquarters was expected to arrive in Miami this weekend to begin reviewing the circumstances surrounding Friday's shooting. One thing they will be looking at is the procedure agents used before trying to arrest the bank robbers. Such a review is routine in shootings involving agents.

Metro detectives say the men who shot the agents, William R. Matix and Michael Lee Platt, were suspects in more than a half-dozen robberies of armored cars and banks, the killing of one bank guard and the wounding of two others. They are also suspected of shooting at least three other people at a West Dade rock pit frequented by target shooters, but police say neither man had a criminal record.

"With their propensity for violence, they could be involved in anything," Metro-Dade robbery Sgt. Tony Monheim said Saturday. "We're obviously looking at them for any old robbery. We're going to have to pull out the logbooks for the past two years."

Still confusion

In all the confusion surrounding the shooting, the actions of Mireles emerged Saturday as one of the few things about which detectives and FBI agents are certain.

Some of the confusion stems from the actions of Platt and Matix. They had been best friends since their Army days in Korea. A few years ago both their wives died mysterious deaths. After that, the two men were always together.

That's how they died. Agents, investigators and witnesses gave this account: After a wild chase up South Dixie Highway, Platt and Matix smashed their car into a tree alongside Southwest 82nd Avenue near 22nd Street. Almost before the car came to a stop, the men began firing at the agents.

Matix, an ex-Marine who attended Riverside Baptist Church in South Dade, opened up with a Ruger Mini-14 semi-automatic rifle; Platt cut loose with a 12-gauge shotgun.

'It was like he was in a
Vietnam-type fire
fight.'

FBI agent

Mireles, the only agent who had a shotgun, was hit and hurt badly but kept shooting. At one point, he was about five to seven yards away from Matix and Platt, trying to fire from behind the trunk of a government car. With his bad left arm, however, he couldn't aim straight or reload.

Mireles, a strapping 250-pounder, fired once, but it went wide to the left. Buckshot tore into the car's left front quarter panel as Matix and Platt tried furiously to get into the car. Mireles dropped the shotgun and got down behind the car. Several agents said Matix and Platt may have been wearing bulletproof vests, but none was found in the car.

Platt was apparently wounded during the earlier shooting, but both men were well enough to climb into a government car. With Mireles down, they apparently thought they had killed or wounded everyone; they tried starting the car.

In a panic, Mireles scuttled forward on his hands and knees. As the men in the car concentrated on getting it going, Mireles, bleeding, stood up. He squeezed the trigger six times.

When paramedics arrived a few minutes later, they pulled Platt and Matix from the car. Platt had two bullet holes in his neck. Matix's torso was covered with blood. They were already dead. A rescue helicopter took the wounded agents away.

Held up vests

Most of the agents weren't wearing bulletproof vests, but some held them in front of them like shields, for protection. McNeill, a supervisory agent, was wearing a vest but was wounded in the upper chest anyway.

The agents fought back with standard six-shot, .38-caliber Smith & Wesson revolvers, but they had little chance. Grogan and Dove were cut down soon after they jumped from their car. Dove was the first man down. Grogan, kneeling to reload, was felled next. Everyone else was wounded or taking cover from the Ruger, a .223-caliber semi-automatic with a 30-shot clip.

"People down, we got people down, let's get some help over here," an agent screamed over his car radio.

Matix did the most damage. Ducking and weaving among cars and trees, he surprised some agents and just sprayed others with high-velocity slugs. He emptied one 30-shot clip and reloaded another. "It was like he was in a Vietnam-type fire fight," an agent who arrived at the shooting later said. "He did a hell of a lot of damage. It was like he was on a mission."

As Dove and Grogan lay dying, some of the wounded agents kept firing.

Kendall neighborhood calm

• shattered by deadly shoot-out

MICHAEL CARRIER

Associated Press Reporter

For 10 minutes, bullets flew and bodies fell. When the dust settled, two FBI agents were dead and five more wounded in what has been termed the bloodiest day in FBI history. Two bank robbery and murder suspects also lay dead.

From FBI and Metro police statements, plus accounts from area residents and other eyewitnesses, a picture of a brutal, confusing gunfight emerges from the unlikeliest of places — a suburban, middle-class, Kendall community called Sunland:

At 9:30 a.m., an FBI agent working with other agents in the area of a number of armored truck and bank robberies, spots a stolen vehicle thought to be used by the suspects. The car is traveling north on South Dixie Highway. Inside are two middle-age males, one with a mustache. The agent requests assistance and is joined shortly by seven other agents in

several cars. Confident they have sufficient backup, the convoy of agents attempts to pull over the late model, black Chevrolet Monte Carlo on a side street behind the Dixie Belle Shopping Center. Gunfire erupts near Southwest 82nd Avenue and 134th Street.

As residents are stirring into their early morning routines, the neighborhood calm is shattered by loud shotgun blasts and the "rat-a-tat-tat" of automatic weapons. The suspects flee north on Southwest 82nd Avenue at a high rate of speed. Later, investigators will find unused ammunition strewn along the getaway path.

Suspects, finding another car of agents blocking their path ahead, make a U-turn near Southwest 82nd Avenue and 122nd Street and head south. An agent in a blue Buick forces the suspects to turn back north again, then drive across a driveway and into an olive tree in the front yard of a white house at 12201

Reporter, photographer arrested at shooting scene

A newspaper photographer and a reporter arrested at the scene following the bloody FBI shoot-out in Kendall reportedly slipped behind barricaded police lines and were told repeatedly to leave, according to Lucy Fitts, Metro police spokeswoman.

A supervisor of the photographer denied that the journalists had done anything wrong.

Albert Coys, a Miami Herald photographer and Joseph Treaster, a New York Times reporter, were arrested and charged with trespassing and obstructing a police officer, Fitts said.

Fitts said the pair lifted the plastic police rope that barricaded the crime scene and walked underneath. Only police officers are allowed to step behind the rope, she said.

Police said the men responsible for the rock pit shootings — and possibly two murders — liked to fire automatic assault rifles — such as Ruger Minis-14 and Colt AR-15 — semi-automatic pistols and shotguns, all weapons preferred by paramilitary groups and survivalists.

Matix and Platt were armed with machine guns, shotguns and pistols when they were gunned down in a hail of more than 100 bullets, investigators said.

Corless said the FBI has "no other information that there are any other persons involved" in the robbery gang. But he declined to rule out the possibility that

"They were asked quietly to leave numerous times and they didn't," Fitts said. "Once we've told you not to do it and you do it, there's nothing we can do."

Pete Weitzel, Miami Herald managing editor, said Coys "was doing his job as a news photographer" when he was arrested.

"We don't have any indication that he did anything that he shouldn't have done, and we have lodged a complaint with Metro police on the incident," Weitzel said.

Dave Jones, national editor for The New York Times said he had no comment on Treaster's arrest.

—Kathryn Lorusso

more people may be involved in the robberies and rock-pit shootings.

"That's a part of the ongoing investigation," he said.

Metro police are investigating the rock pit shootings and the robberies in conjunction with the FBI.

"As far as we're concerned this is the group," said Metro Sgt. Moehlein. "This is it — unless we find something out of the ordinary."

A team of FBI agents were conducting "spot checks" of banks in South Dade as part of the ongoing investigation into a half-dozen armored car and

bank robberies when one agent spotted the stolen, wine-colored Chevrolet Monte Carlo the criminals were believed to be using, investigators said.

The team assigned the task investigates bank robberies, kidnappings, extortion attempts and civil rights violations.

The agents had the tag number and description of the car, plus they knew many of the armed robberies had occurred on Friday, Corless said.

Having spotted the stolen car — said to have been used in a previous robbery and an attempted murder — the agent radioed for assistance and was quickly joined by other officers conducting spot checks in the area, Corless said.

Corless said when the agents thought enough officers had arrived to back them up, they attempted to pull the car over. Witnesses said that is when the killing gunfire erupted behind the Dixie Belle Shopping Center.

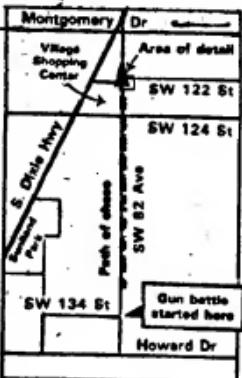
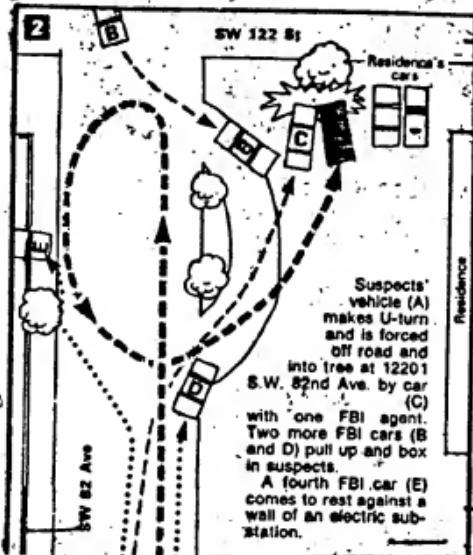
Nearby resident Bob Stebbins, 46, said he was working in his garden when he heard the gunfire and went into the street.

He watched as first one FBI agent fell wounded, then another.

Stebbins said he watched in horror as one of wounded agents "started flopping back and forth" on the pavement. The other wounded agent kept returning the assailants' fire as he fell bleeding on the street, Stebbins said.

Miami News Reporter Christine Wolf contributed to this report, which also was supplemented with material by Associated Press the New York Times News Service.

Here is how the Kendall shoot-out occurred



1
FBI agents spot suspect vehicle believed used in several armed robberies and follow while other agents are called to assist.

The gun battle erupts at Southwest 134th Street and



(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Date: 4/12/86
 Edition: THE PALM BEACH POST
 PAGE 1A

Title:

Character:

or

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Wild Dade Shoot-Out Claims 2

FBI Agents

Gunbattle
 'Looked Like
 OK Corral'

*Witnesses Stunned
 By Street Violence*

By William Cooper Jr.

Staff writer

KENDALL — Bob Stebbins and his girlfriend Billie Holloway were outside watering the flowers yesterday when they heard gunshots.

"I looked down the street and it looked like the OK Corral," said Stebbins, who lives with Holloway on Southwest 82nd Avenue.

"You could see it and you could smell it ... there was so much gunfire," Holloway said. "A big cloud of dust filled the area where the shots were being fired."

When the dust settled, Stebbins — who lives three doors down from the scene — saw two men in the street firing guns.

They immediately took a couple of shots at the FBI guy and killed him," he said. "They were trying to get over to the FBI car so they could climb in and use it as a getaway car. It was a hellacious amount of fire. It reminded me of a pistol or rifle range at full firing ... A guy was kneeling, squatting, with a weapon in his hand, firing. There was another car with two doors wide open and a guy firing across the trunk of his car."

Yesterday, the quiet middle-class suburb southwest of Miami where Stebbins lives was the center of the worst gunbattle in the FBI's 76-year history. Two FBI agents were killed and five were wounded in a 10-minute gunbattle with two suspected bank robbers.

Stebbins said he pulled his portable telephone from his pocket and called

Turn to **WITNESSES, A4**

Witnesses

From Page 1

the emergency number 911.

Meanwhile, Holloway said, cars continued to travel along Southwest 82nd Avenue in the middle of the gunfire between FBI agents and the two suspects.

"I really credit the agent who held up his gun while cars went by ... he held up his weapon in order not to shoot civilians," Holloway said.

"When the firing started, the people started coming out of the Farm Store (across the street) and we yelled, 'There's gunfire,'" Holloway said. "Those idiots kept going on through. But the agents knew they were civilians and halted their gunfire."

Stebbins said he continued to watch the battle through his girlfriend's telephoto camera lens.

"That's when I saw the agent in front of his car get hit. He pierced up like a jackknife and then I saw him go down," he said.

Holloway said she saw a second man go down in the middle of the bullet-ridden street and that was when she stopped watching.

Down the street, Robert Roache and his secretary were talking in Roache's law office at Southwest 82nd Avenue and Southwest 124th Street, 50 yards from where the agents tried to arrest the suspects.

"I was dumb enough to go outside and see what was going on after I heard the shots," Roache said. "We have heard shots around here maybe once or twice but usually this is a quiet area."

Roache said when he peeked around the corner of the building he saw a man lying wounded in the street.

After that I got out of sight and my secretary and I went back inside ... I decided not to be a brave per-



Agent Benjamin Grogan
... was a 25-year veteran of FBI

son," he said.

Roache's daughter Colleen said she had just pulled into the parking lot when people were panicking and telling her to go back.

"I just sat in the car scared to death ... It's incredible. I can't believe it happened," she said.

Residents said yesterday's carnage was a shocking indication that urban crime has moved into their once-homey community.

"I hear bangs and pops around here all of the time," said a resident who didn't want to be identified, "and you know it's not firecrackers."

Al Alato has been operating his Southwest 124th Street newsstand for more than 25 years and has never seen anything like yesterday's occurrence.

"A young woman came in the store



Agent Jerry Dove
... began work for bureau in 1982

and she was hysterical. She said, 'They're shooting at each other, call the police,'" he said.

Alato said the woman told the police because she knew more about what was happening than he did.

The unidentified woman called the police, told Alato she wasn't going to wait and then left Al's Newsstand.

A few minutes later another woman came to the newsstand and after hearing what happened said, "Boy, is the neighborhood going now."

The fear of retribution was apparent because residents spoke only with the promise of anonymity.

"We live in a very peaceful neighborhood. But right now it's hard to say if it will change," one said. "You can't guarantee that this type of thing won't happen in your neighborhood."



Agent John Hanlon is carried to helicopter. He was listed as serious but stable last night. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Police survey shoot-out scene where suspect lies dead. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Rescuers rush agent Gordon McNeill from scene; he was serious but stable last night

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Feds' Worst Clash Kills 2 Suspects

By Scott G. Campbell

Staff Writer

MENDALL — Eight FBI agents stepped out of their cars and into the bloodiest gunbattle in the agency's 78-year history yesterday morning. Passers-by in this Miami suburb who blundered into the firefight, causing the agents to hold their fire at one point, said they thought it was a *Miami Vice* scene. But the carnage was real.

The agents outnumbered the pair of suspected bank robbers, who police said may also be Dade County's rock pit murderers. But the bureau's standard-issue shotguns and .357 Magnum revolvers couldn't keep up with the firepower of the submachine gun and modified shotgun the suspects were carrying, the FBI said.

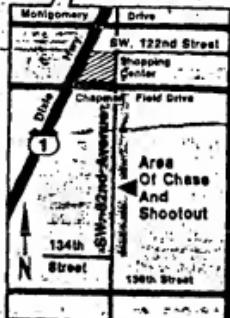
When the shooting ceased 10 minutes later, two agents were dead and five wounded — three of them seriously.

Both suspects — described by FBI Director William Webster as "particularly violent" robbers — also were killed.

"I thought it was a drug deal that went bad, because that's what everyone does down here," said Duane Parker, 24, who said he saw the entire battle. "Then I thought it was a *Miami Vice* episode, but then I saw the blood and dead guys and thought: 'No way!'"

The incident began about 9:30 a.m. at Southwest 122nd Avenue and 120th Street, near the Sunland Shopping Center in Kendall, according to FBI spokesman Jack French in Washington, D.C. The agents were acting on a tip that a gang that had been robbing banks and armored cars in Dade County was about to pull another job.

The agents were apparently sur-



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 PAGE 1A

Title:

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I thought it was a *Miami Vice* episode, but then I saw the blood and dead guys and thought 'No way!'

veiling a number of banks that had been previously robbed or that the subjects' car had been seen in vicinity of," he said. "The agents spotted this car and gave chase, and a firefight resulted."

The car, a stolen black Monte Carlo, had a license plate matching the number of a car police suspect has been used in recent Miami-area holdups, according to Metro-Dade police officials.

French was not sure if the pursuit was an actual chase or if the agents were just tailing the suspects. He also didn't know where the pursuit started.

"We don't have that here," he said. "It's not clear which one of the three

— Turn to SHOOT-OUT, A4

Shoot-Out

From Page 1

banks this started at.

But the pursuit ended in the driveway of a well-shaded white brick duplex on Southwest 82nd Avenue. The agents had the gunmen boxed in, and the suspects wheeled their car into the driveway, smashed into a bottlebrush tree and came out firing, said Joseph V. Corless, special agent in charge of the FBI's Miami office.

As the suspects blazed away with a submachine gun and a modified shotgun, the agents fought back with only a shotgun and their handguns.

Witnesses said the FBI agents interrupted their gunfire when drivers, unaware of what was happening, drove down the street.

There were so many shots fired in the 10-minute period that the smell of gunpowder began to waft through the neighborhood, witnesses said.

"All I heard was the shots. There must've been 100 rounds fired. They were shooting for 10 minutes," said Mario Tejeiro, who was unloading a truck at an office complex near the scene.

"It went on and on and on," said Charlie Davis, who lives nearby.

Witness Bob Stebbins said the incident could have been worse if the shooting had started later. The site was near Palmetto High School, and many students drive through the intersection at lunch, he said.

"Thank God it went down at that time. If it had gone down at lunch hour, it could have been a real disaster," he said.

The FBI identified the slain agents as Benjamin P. Grogan, 53, a 25-year veteran, and Jerry Dove, 30, an FBI agent since 1962.

Wounded and still in Baptist Hospital last night were Gordon G. McNeill, 43, a 19-year veteran, who was in serious but stable condition; Edmundo Mireles Jr., 33, who joined the FBI in September 1979 and was in stable condition; and John F. Hanlon Jr., 48, an FBI agent since August 1963 who was in serious but stable condition.

Treated for minor wounds at Jackson Memorial Hospital and released yesterday were Richard Mansuetti, 43, who has been with the bureau for 15 years, and Gilbert Orrantia, 27, an FBI agent since April 1982.

Webster identified the slain suspects as Michael Platt, 32, and William R. Matix, whose age was not

given. Speaking at a Washington, D.C., news conference, Webster said the men "were particularly violent individuals" and heavily armed.

"It appears they were armed with at least one automatic weapon capable of firing at least 30 rounds in a single container and one shotgun that appears to have been modified to carry additional shells," he said.

Metro-Dade police say the rock pit murderers would hide and wait for target shooters. They would ambush the shooter, kill him and take his car, according to police.

The car used by the suspects was owned by Jose Collazo, who survived an attack by the rock pit murderers. On March 12, he was shot four times and left for dead. But he lived and walked three miles until he found a pay phone and called police.

Last night, Collazo still had not identified the two suspects as the men who shot him.

Al Carbaliros, Metro-Dade police spokesman, said there have been at least three armored car robberies and at least two bank robberies in southwestern Dade County during the last year.

"In the holdups, the group would wait for the guards and just shoot them. They were ruthless," Carbaliros said.

The FBI isn't used to losing agents, a spokesman said.

"This is just a devastating day for the FBI in Miami ... This is the first time we've had as many agents killed and wounded in one particular incident," Corless said.

Since it was formed in July 1908, 27 agents have been killed by "adversarial fire," French said. Their names are on the bureau's Roll of Service Martyrs — ooto which soon will be added the names of Grogan and Dove, French said.

There have been other incidents when two agents were killed during a gunbattle but never with this many wounded also, French said. On Aug. 8, 1979, two special agents J. Robert Porter and Charles Elmore were killed when a "deranged individual" stormed into their office, shot them and then committed suicide. In 1975, two agents were killed during an American Indian Movement takeover at Wounded Knee. AIM leader Russell Means was charged with that crime but never convicted.

Several years ago five agents were killed when a small airplane they were using to transport a suspect crashed. But those men were not listed as "martyrs" because they were not attacked.

The difference between a police officer's job and an agent's job accounts for the relatively low number of deaths the bureau has suffered in the nearly 76 years it has been around, French said.

"Well, first of all, we're not an enforcement agency the way the police are," he said. "The police are out on the street a regular basis. They are more likely to catch people with stolen cars and burglars and robbers in the act of committing the crime."

"Most of our work is reactive. We can usually choose our occasion of arrest and then come in with greater manpower and firepower than the people we're arresting."

This report was supplemented by The Associated Press.

29 Agents Died on Duty

MIAMI (AP) — The death of two FBI agents killed in a shoot-out yesterday in a Miami suburb brought to 29 the number of agents killed on duty since the FBI was formed in 1908.

Edwin Shanahan was the first agent to die in the line of duty. He was fatally shot by a Chicago car thief in October of 1925.

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SECTION B-

THE VICTIMS-
SA BEN GROGAN
SA JERRY DOVE

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state)

THE MIAMI HERALD
Miami, Florida

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Two slain agents brought brains, savvy to their jobs

By MARC FISHER
Herald Staff Writer

The FBI men killed in Friday's shoot-out in Kendall were classic examples of the agency's traditional emphasis on savvy police skills and its more recent accent on brainpower and academic achievement.

In telephone calls to their families, President Reagan on Saturday joined agents, friends and relatives in mourning Benjamin Grogan, the 53-year-old agent known as "The Doctor," and Gerald Dove, a 30-year-old lawyer who was thrilled by the action of crime in Miami.

Grogan, who earned his nickname for his unusual skill in electronics, was a supervisor in the agency's criminal section. But he was known primarily as the consummate street cop, a man who in 25 years with the agency had become South Florida's top expert on bank robberies, kidnappings and extortion, the classic "heavy crimes" on which the FBI has made its reputation.

"Every bank robbery that came along, he had a piece of," said retired agent Bill Kelly, who called Grogan "one of my very best friends. Of the more than 200 agents I worked with here, he was the total FBI agent."

Grogan taught firearms courses and headed the FBI SWAT teams in the Miami office. He trained with the Army's elite Delta Force.

"If you had to have an ideal man out in the wilderness to handle any kind of problem from kidnapping to espionage to spitting on the sidewalk on an Indian reservation, Grogan was your man," Kelly said.

Until 1970, when he married Sandra, then a clerk and now an investigative employee in the Fort Lauderdale FBI office, Grogan lived a Spartan life. He had minimal furniture, barely more than a bed and a chair. He drove an ordinary Pontiac. He was a marathon runner. He devoted time and money to the Special Olympics.

Grogan used to go fishing in the Everglades, getting up at 4 a.m. to go into the canals for days that often lasted until midnight. Then he would go home and start cleaning fish.

Grogan, who had no children, came to the FBI somewhat late, after teaching Latin and biology at Morris College in Atlanta. He was a religious man.

His other survivors include his mother, Alice; two sisters, Mary Anne Desposito and Susan Semmer; and a brother, Michael.

Dove, an agent since 1982, was an ambitious, hard-working bachelor who came to the FBI after a brief career as a lawyer. A family friend at the West Virginia home of Patricia Dove, the agent's mother, said Saturday working for the FBI was Dove's "life-long dream."

Dove attended Marshall University in West Virginia, then earned a law degree from West Virginia University. He practiced with the state attorney general's office

then became a legal instructor for the state police, said the friend, who refused to give his name.

After joining the FBI, Dove served in the Huntington, W. Va., San Diego and Miami offices. The agent had no siblings and is survived by his mother and grandmother.

Joseph Kanter, president of the Bank of Florida, Saturday announced the formation of a fund for the families of the slain and wounded agents. He asked that contributions be sent to the FBI Fund, Bank of Florida, 8106 Sunset Dr., Miami, 33143.



Benjamin Grogan



Gerald Dove

Services set for agents

The funeral for slain FBI agent Benjamin Grogan will be at 1 p.m. Monday at the church he attended, Visitation Catholic Church, 19100 N. Miami Ave. Archbishop Edward McCarthy will celebrate the Mass.

Viewing hours are today from 2 to 4 p.m. and again from 6 to 8 p.m. at Bennett & Sons funeral home, 15201 NW Seventh Ave.

Burial will be Wednesday at the family plot in Grogan's hometown of Brunswick, Ga.

The funeral for agent Gerald Dove will be at 10 a.m. Tuesday at Snodgrass Funeral Home in South Charleston, W. Va. Color Miami Shores Funeral Home is in charge of local arrangements.

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

FBI handles its grief as always — secretly

By Patricia Ellich
Staff Writer

The FBI handled its grief Saturday as it does its day-to-day police business — in secret.

A day after the bloodiest shoot-out in the bureau's history, the Miami office was alive with activity but stingy with personal details about the agents who were slain and wounded in a devastating shoot-out Friday in the south Dade community of Kendall.

Family members of the two agents killed in the shoot-out were not talking to reporters, and bureau spokesmen declined to disclose certain details about the other agents, such as where they live.

With its flag outside at half staff, the office was fielding calls, dispatching staff psychiatrists to comfort agents and family members, and working on leads to the shooting, according to Lloyd Dean, assistant special agent in charge of the Miami office.

Two special agents, Benjamin T. Grogan and Jerry Dove, were shot to death Friday when they confronted two bank-robbing suspects.

The two suspects were killed and five other FBI men wounded in a haze of gunshots.

Three agents remain hospitalized: Agent Gordon G. McNeill, 43, the leader of the unit, and agent John F. Haslon Jr., 44, were both listed in serious but stable condition at Baptist Hospital in Miami. Agent Edmundo Mireles Jr., 33, was in fair condition at South Miami Hospital with shotgun wounds to his left arm and face.

Two other wounded agents, Gilbert M. Orrantia and Richard A. Matsuura, were treated and released from hospitals Friday.

All of the agents belong to a 15-member team called the Criminal Squad, Dean said. The unit deals with the most violent types of crime policed by the FBI, including kidnapping and bank robberies.

FBI agents consider Miami a crime-fighting capital.

"This is the hot spot of all the FBI offices," Dean said.

Grogan, 53, a 25-year veteran of the bureau, "was a very meticulous person who was a superstar in his area," Dean said. "He was looked up to because of his vast experience."

Grogan was only a year short of retirement from the FBI.

His wife, Sandra, is an FBI secretary in Fort Lauderdale.

"He was a good, good, good man," said the Rev. Brendan Dalton, pastor of Visitation Catholic Church in Miami.

Grogan had belonged to the church for the past 15 years. His funeral will be conducted at the church at 1 p.m. Monday, with the Archbishop Edward McCarthy of Miami conducting the service. Burial will be in Brunswick, Ga.

While Grogan was on the home stretch of his career, Dove had barely started.

Dove, an agent since 1962, "was an extremely aggressive agent who had taken it upon himself to do things such as train himself to become a police instructor," Dean said. "We don't usually allow someone of that young an age to do that."

Dove, 30, was born in Charleston, W.Va., and earned a law degree from West Virginia University in 1961. He worked in the Huntington, W.Va., and San Diego offices of the FBI before coming to Miami.

Meanwhile, a Miami banker who said he was "sick and tired of the crime" has started a fund for the agents' families.

Joseph H. Kanter, chairman of the board of Miami-based Bank of Florida, said he decided to start the fund Saturday morning while talking to Miami Vice star Don Johnson about the shoot-out.

"He was my first contributor," Kanter said.

"Checks should be made out to 'FBI Fund' and sent to the Bank of Florida, 6106 Sunset Drive, Miami, 33163. The phone number is 533-5596."

Staff Writer Todd Nelson contributed to this report.

(Indicate page, name of
newspaper, city and state.)

SUN SENTINEL
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Time:

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Benjamin Grogan
didn't even need to
be on the streets
Friday. At 53, he
was just a year shy of
retirement.



Gerald Dove, 30, told
fellow agents he
loved the excitement
of working in South
Florida.

The dead

Agents loved street work, hoped their jobs mattered

By BRIAN DUFFY
Special Staff Writer

The two FBI agents shot to death Friday didn't look much alike and didn't talk much alike, and one was nearly twice as old as the other. What Gerald Dove and Benjamin T. Grogan shared was a love of their work, and a sense that what they did really mattered.

The people who knew Ben Grogan's work, cops and lawyers, had a nickname for him. They called him The Doctor, and he laughed.

Grogan was a pro, agents and prosecutors say; he polished his skills with a careful, meticulous eye for detail. For his trouble he often got the jobs no one else wanted or could do. When a secret listening device had to be put in a particularly tricky situation, other agents knew just who to call. They called The Doctor.

"We kidded him about it, but it was because of his abilities," Frederick S. Mann, an assistant U.S. attorney, said Friday night. "But he was good, he was very skillful."

After he was shot to death on the streets of Kendall, other agents recalled that Grogan didn't even need to be there. At 53, he had nearly 20 years with the bureau and was just a year shy of retirement.

He could have had any number of jobs that kept him behind a desk and got him home to his family at a reasonable hour. But Grogan decided recently to leave his job conducting wiretaps and other electronic surveillance. He decided to go back to field work. "He really wanted to get back on the street again," said Mann,

who worked with Grogan to prosecute the 1983 kidnapping of Clelia Sol de Quinones-Mesa, the wife of a former Salvadoran ambassador to the United States. "He was a good agent."

He was a religious man who once taught Latin and biology at Marist College, in Atlanta. That was before he joined the FBI in 1966.

"He came to church here every Sunday," said the Rev. Brendan Dalton, pastor of Visitation Catholic Church. "I would say to you he was a man of faith and a man of God who loved his family."

Grogan is survived by his wife, Sandra. She worked in the FBI's Fort Lauderdale office. The couple had no children.

Gerald Dove was just 30, a rugged-looking bachelor with a deep and abiding interest in the law. He took his law degree from West Virginia University and decided to join the FBI.

Before he was appointed special agent in 1982, Dove served as the legal adviser to the state police in his native West Virginia. The FBI assigned him to its Huntington office, then he was transferred to San Diego.

In 1984, Dove was transferred to Miami, where he was assigned to work bank robberies and extortion cases. He stayed in close touch with his family. His mother, Patricia Dove, lives in Dunbar, W.Va.

Like Grogan, Dove told fellow agents, he loved the excitement of working in South Florida and enjoyed the tumult of the streets and the prestige of the job of special agent for the FBI. Also like Grogan, other agents said, Jerry Dove believed his job made a difference.

Slain agent mourned

FBI men hailed as 'American heroes'

By BRIAN DUFFY

Herald Staff Writer

Friends, fellow agents, judges and lawyers gathered Monday with a grieving, overwrought family to honor and remember Benjamin P. Grogan, a career FBI man who was murdered in the line of duty last week.

In a simple church in far North Dade, six pallbearers — agents and close friends of Grogan's — cried as they rolled the casket slowly toward the altar. His widow, Sandra, followed close behind, clutching a folded American flag, tears streaming down her face.

"He sought to harm no one, and yet he was a soldier ready to fight the battle he knew would come at any moment," Peter

Fay, a federal appeals court judge and friend of Grogan's, told a crowd that spilled out the doors of Visitation Catholic Church.

"The battle was fought not for personal gain, but for you and me. And that is the greatest form of bravery."

FBI Director William Webster, who flew from Washington, D.C., to attend the funeral Mass, called Grogan and Gerald Dove, the other slain agent, "American heroes."

Earlier, Webster told hundreds of agents gathered in the church that Friday's shoot-out, the worst in the history of the FBI, would strengthen the bureau's resolve

Please turn to FUNERAL / 16A



United Press International

Sandra Grogan, widow of Benjamin P. Grogan, carries flag and crucifix after funeral.

FBI agents called 'American heroes'

FUNERAL /from LA

to fight crime in South Florida. Five agents were wounded, three seriously, in the shoot-out Friday with two bank-robbery subjects on a street in Kendall, a suburb south of Miami. Agents Ed Mireles, Gordon McNeil and John Hanlon were recuperating in hospitals Monday. Webster visited them before the funeral.

The two other agents, Richard Manuzzi and Gilbert Orrantia, were released after treatment Friday. They attended the funeral Monday.

The suspected bank robbers,

William Matix and Michael Platt, were killed by Mireles minutes after they killed Grogan and Dove.

"This incident involved more agents than any other, and in that sense it is the worst," Webster said in an interview after the Mass. "In another sense, it shows the agents are out there doing their jobs."

"And the support you see here today, it's that kind of support that's going to help the FBI do the job for the people here in Miami."

Chief U.S. District Judge

James Lawrence King, who attended the funeral Mass with at least six other federal judges, ordered flags flown at half-staff at federal buildings throughout South Florida. Most federal court proceedings were canceled in Miami Monday afternoon.

Hundreds of law officers, some from as far away as the Treasure Coast, jammed the church, where Archbishop Edward McCarthy said the funeral Mass with 15 other priests.

With an American flag on the altar and clusters of red and white roses behind him, McCarthy told the worshippers that

Grogan, who once taught Latin at a Catholic college, studied as a young man to become a priest.

"He was never closer to the life of a priest than when he gave his life on Friday morning," McCarthy said. "This morning we are searching for some comfort and some answers."

As the Mass ended, a piano played and a choir sang. The six pallbearers, their eyes still red, rolled the casket out of the church toward a hearse.

Grogan's wife and his mother, Alice, assisted by two family members, walked slowly behind

Grogan's nephew followed them, dragging a scuffed brown teddy bear.

Dozens of agents, career lawyers, were in tears.

The pallbearers loaded the casket into the hearse and family and friends got into cars. A police motorcycle escorted them away, blue lights winking in the sunlight.

Grogan will be buried Wednesday in Brunswick, Ga., his hometown. Gerald Dove will be buried today in Charleston, W.Va.



SCOTT W. ASZKENAS / Miami Herald Staff
Archbishop Edward McCarthy comforts Alice Grogan, the mother of slain FBI man.



FBI Director William Webster, center, enters South Miami Hospital to see wounded agent Ed Mireles.

MARY LOU FOY / Miami Herald Staff

Slain FBI agent: 'He was noble... guardian of peace'

By Buddy Nevins
Miami Bureau Chief

As his fellow agents fought back tears and his wife sobbed, one of two FBI men slain in a bloody shootout with suspected bank robbers was eulogized Monday as a martyr in the fight against crime.

More than 1,500 people attending Agent Benjamin Grogan's funeral heard him described as a religious man who once wanted to be a priest but instead found another way to help the public — as an FBI agent.

"He was a noble, heroic, committed guardian of our peace and freedom," said Archbishop Edward A. McCarthy at the service.

Grogan and Agent Gerald Dove were gunned down Friday in a wild battle on a suburban south Dade County street as they tried to arrest two robbery suspects. Five other agents were wounded, and the two suspects were killed.

As he left the funeral, FBI Director William Webster called Grogan "brave and commendable" and said his killing should remind the public that FBI agents were "always willing to put their lives on the line."

Visitation Catholic Church in north Dade County was packed with 800 family members, friends, co-workers at the FBI and officers from other law enforcement agencies. More than 700 were unable to get into the church and stood outside, listening to the services over speakers.

Many uniformed officers, including dozens from Broward and Palm Beach counties, were openly weeping as they filed into the church. Most had black duct tape stripped across their badges.

The agent's coffin arrived at the church in a motorcade led by more than a dozen motorcycle officers. It was carried into the sanctuary by FBI agents, friends of Grogan's during his 25 years with the agency.

(Indicate page, name of
newspaper, city and state.)

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Agents

Continued from page 1A

Grogan, the agent's wife and an investigative employee with the FBI's Fort Lauderdale office, as she was helped into the church. She entered clutching a wooden crucifix and the hand of her nephew, Shawn.

Shawn, 3-year-old godson of the slain agent, appeared bewildered as he looked around the church packed with crying adults. Pinched to Shawn's double-breasted jacket was a police badge with black tape across it.

"Ben Grogan was a good man, a man of faith, a Christian man, a man who loved and cared and was concerned about others," said the Rev. Brendan Dalton, the agent's pastor.

U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Peter Fay said Grogan, "a true patriot," fell victim in the continuing war against "the hoods of our world."

While Fay eulogized the dead agent, Webster sat with his head bowed. After the service, he promised reporters an intensive investigation into the bloodiest day in FBI history.

Webster said agents already are digging into the backgrounds of the two suspected bank robbers.

William Matix, 34, and Michael Platt, 32, appeared to neighbors and friends to be normal family men. The FBI says they were responsible for a string of violent bank and armored car robberies and possibly three killings.

There had been some speculation that Matix and Platt might be members of a right-wing survivalist group but Webster said the FBI had turned up no evidence tying the pair to others.

"We have not yet connected them to anybody," said Webster. "We have connected them to a number of bank robberies where lethal ruthless shootings occurred. "Before we're through, we'll know everything about them from their birth to their deaths," he vowed.

The FBI director refused to criticize the way agents attempted to arrest Matix and Platt.

"We have some disadvantages," said Webster. "We don't fire first. We try to resolve these things peacefully. We don't jeopardize bystanders."

"This was a routine surveillance," he said. "It happened very

fast."

Grogan and Dova were on surveillance south of Miami Friday morning when they spotted a stolen car that agents said was used in earlier robberies.

When they and their backups tried to arrest Matix and Platt, they were met with rapid fire from a high-powered, semi-automatic rifle.

Before Grogan's funeral, Webster visited three agents still hospitalized with wounds from Friday's gunbattle. He called Agent Edmundo Mireles "a real hero" for "continuing to return fire" although shot in the arm and forehead.

Mireles was "in pain" but "getting better" at South Miami Hospital, Webster said. The agent was reported in fair condition by the hospital.

Agents Gordon McNeill and John Hanlon were reported in stable condition in Baptist Hospital. McNeill has a chest wound, and Hanlon was shot in the thigh.

Webster told reporters he would attend services for Dova today in Charleston, W. Va.

Grogan is to be buried Wednesday in Brunswick, Ga.



And photo by ROBERT MEYER

Agents Benjamin Grogan's wife, Sandra, with her nephew, leaves services for her husband Monday.

Grogan's mother, Alice, walks with the aid of a crutch and was supported by two family members as she took her seat at the funeral.

Tears were streaming down the face of Sandra
Please see AGENTS, 11A



UPI ASSOCIATED PRESS

Two left, Jerry Dove's mother, grandmother and other family members listen to the eulogy.

Slain FBI agents mourned as police re-examine deaths of suspects' wives

By Keith W. Slaton
Associated Press

Hundreds of law officers, their badges banded in black, crowded a small Miami church and a West Virginia funeral home as the FBI eulogized two of its own slain in the bureau's bloodiest day.

FBI Director William Webster Tuesday delivered a short eulogy in South Charleston, W. Va., over the flag-draped casket of Special Agent Jerry Dove, 30, one of the agents killed in a Miami gunfight with two robbery suspects.

A Columbus, Ohio, newspaper reported that police have re-opened their investigation of the 1983 slaying of one suspect's wife, while Metro-Dade authorities in Miami say they are looking again at the 1984 shotgun death of the other suspect's wife.

About 300 state troopers in full dress uniform crowded into the basement and side rooms of the funeral home in West Virginia to hear the service over a speaker system.

"We expect a great deal from our special agents," Webster said. "Jerry Dove gave all he can. He served his country well."

Webster joined about 1,500 others Monday for the funeral of agent Benjamin J. Grogan, 53, in Miami.

after visiting agents wounded in the shootout.

Webster, who met privately with Grogan's widow after the Roman Catholic service, vowed an intensive investigation of the two suspects, William Matix, 34, and Michael Platt, 32, who opened fire with high-powered automatic rifles, killing the two agents and wounding the others during a traffic surveillance assignment.

"Before we're through, we going to know everything about them from the time they were born to the time they died," he said.

Investigations focusing on the death of their wives have already begun.

The Columbus Dispatch reported Tuesday that Matix collected \$350,000 in life insurance payments for the death of his wife, Patricia, who was killed on the job Dec. 30, 1983.

Earlier, Metro-Dade police said they are taking a new look at the 1984 shotgun death of Platt's first wife, which was ruled a suicide.

Local authorities have tentatively linked the suspects to eight armed robberies in the past year, plus three robberies and shootings at an isolated rock quarry in western Dade County.

During the game, he met a woman who attended Wayside. They played volleyball. Matix switched over to her church. Within three weeks, they were married.

A Wayside churchgoer described the marriage Sunday: "They eloped. They went on a honeymoon. And when they came

back, she was pregnant. The baby was born a few weeks ago." Matix left that wife within weeks after finding out she was pregnant.

Matix "always had nice comments to make," said another churchgoer who played in that Friday night volleyball game. "He talked the whole religious lingo like we do. I thought he was a

very nice man, but I thought there was a lot of hostility in him."

"During the game, he would get very violent, like if the ball came to him and he messed up or something. Or if he was losing. It was like he had a split personality."

Herald staff writer Brian Duffy contributed to this report.

Gunmen tied to holdup gang, rock pit murders

By STEPHEN K. DONG
And DAVID MARCUS
Miami Staff Writers

Two men killed in Friday's bloody shoot-out with FBI agents were members of what police describe as a loosely organized gang of South Dade armed robbers who specialize in armored car holdups.

The heavily armed gang, suspected of involvement in at least half a dozen armored car and bank robberies over the past year, also may have killed at least three people in recent months at the West Dade rock pit used by target

shooters.

"These guys are wild guys," Metro-Dade Robbery Sgt. Tony Monheim said in an interview two weeks ago.

At a press conference Friday, FBI Director William Webster said agents also are investigating possible ties between the two men, Michael Platt and William R. Matiz, and terrorist or revolutionary groups. "We don't have enough information to make a definitive statement . . . but we are looking at this aspect very, very closely," Webster said.

An FBI agent in Washington

later said many factors — including the men's behavior during the shoot-out — suggested ties to extremist groups. "They did not shoot out of fear or excitement. It was cold, it was calculated," the agent said.

The theory was bolstered by the weaponry and costumes favored by the gang — the outfits are similar to those worn by survivalists. Several of the robberies have been committed by men in fatigues, jump suits and blue police-style jackets.

"They really sound like survivalists — we kicked that around,"

little bit," Monheim said. "They are very clean-cut, definitely Americans. They are kind of like the redneck type."

On March 12, Jose Collazo, a 30-year-old target shooter, was at the pit, located south of Tamiami Trail at 157th Avenue, when he was held up by two white males in their late 20s or early 30s. At gunpoint, the men ordered him into a nearby canal, shot him four times, then stole his car. He survived by playing dead, then crawled out and walked three miles for help.

The victim's car was used a

week later in a robbery at the Barnett Bank at 13593 South Dixie Highway.

Two months earlier, on Jan. 10, a Brink's truck was robbed and a guard critically wounded outside the same bank. The robbers used a car that police traced to Emilio Briel, 25, of Northwest Dade. But Briel had been missing since Oct. 5, after telling his mother that he was going to the rock pit that day to shoot cans. Investigators now believe that Briel was killed by the robbers.

Finally, a still-unidentified skeleton of a third possible victim was



Rock pit murder suspects found near the rock pit March 1. Monheim called the gang cold-blooded and fond of high-powered weapons. "In all these robberies, it's all automatic weapons, shotguns, heavy, heavy armament," he said.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

THE MIAMI NEWS Miami, FL

Page 13A

Date: BROWARD

Edition: April 12, 1986

Title:

Location:
Submitting Office: MIAMI

Indexing:

Cops: 2 suspects were bold bandits

CHRISTINE WOLFF

Miami Daily Reporter

Two men killed in a shoot-out with FBI agents in Kendall are suspected to be linked to a half-dozen, Kendall daylight armored car robberies — a guard was killed in one — a bank robbery, and three shootings at a South Dade rock pit, police said.

Three of the armored car robberies occurred within one week during October 1985. A Barnett Bank branch at 13595 S. Dixie Highway was hit twice in three months — once, money was stolen from the bank and another time an armored car parked out front was held up.

The FBI and Metro police believe the suspects

highway. The men escaped with bags of cash from the armored truck, leaving the scene in a car traced to a 22-year-old Northwest Dade man. The man, Endo Brie, has been missing since October when he left his home to go target shoot at the abandoned rock pit at Tamiami Trail and 157th Avenue. Police believe Brie was murdered, and his car stolen.

March 12: Two men shot a 30-year-old target shooter and threw him into a canal at the rock pit. The victim played dead, and the men left in his black, Chevrolet Monte Carlo.

March 19: Two men wearing ski masks robbed the same Barnett Bank, making off with two bags containing overnight deposits. The robbers drove away in the stolen black Monte Carlo, police said.

killed yesterday may be responsible for some of the following:

✓ April 26, 1985: A Wells Fargo guard outside a Southeast Bank branch in Miami Lakes, was robbed of about \$100,000 by three men wearing ski masks. The men fled in a stolen car.

✓ June 5, 1985: A Wells Fargo truck robbery was foiled by the truck driver outside a Sizzler Family Steak House Restaurant, 16447 Bird Road.

✓ June 21, 1985: A Wells Fargo guard, Miguel Portu-Perra, 41, was shot and killed at the Southern Bell office in Coral Gables by robbers who stole nearly \$40,000 in receipts.

✓ Oct. 10, 1985: Two masked men armed with machine guns and dressed in Army fatigues escaped

with an undetermined amount of cash after robbing a second armored car at the Steak and Ale restaurant, 10001 N.W. 37th Ave.

✓ Oct. 14, 1985: A Wells Fargo guard, Jim Ramirez, was shot in the left thigh when two men tried to steal from a mostly empty bank lobby outside a Winn-Dixie store in Southwest Dade.

✓ Oct. 17, 1985: Two armed robbers overcame armored Locsin's Armored Car guards in the alley behind Daffy's restaurant in Kendall. The Locsin's driver fired four shots at the men, who fled down the alley.

✓ Oct. 10: Two men shot and critically wounded Ernesto Maranje, 29, a British confectioner during a robbery in front of the Barnett Bank, 13595 S. Dixie

S.W. 82nd Ave. The two cars come to rest side-by-side — inches apart.

✓ Agents scream at the suspects to halt, repeatedly identifying themselves as FBI agents, as two other FBI cars race to a stop near the suspect vehicle and the blue Buick. The two suspects burst from the car, one with a handgun, and possibly a shotgun, and the other with a machine gun. Two agents, also scrambling from a beige Buick directly behind the first FBI car, are felled by a burst from the machine gun as they try to cover by crouching behind their vehicle. A lone agent in the Buick is only superficially wounded during the battle.

✓ Another agent gets off several shotgun blasts at the suspects before being hit. His shotgun and spent shells will lay a pool of blood for hours after the shooting ended. Several feet behind him, bullet marks, possibly from the machine gun, scar a brick wall running along the back of the shopping center. A fifth agent, apparently wearing a bullet-proof vest,

is hit and falls into the middle of Southwest 82nd Avenue. It is unclear where and when the other two federal agents sustain their injuries.

✓ Sometime during the exchange, a third north-bound FBI car sideswipes a tree at road's edge and comes to a stop across the street. One, possibly two, agents spring from the car, guns blazing. Citizens, unaware of what is happening, drive through the hail of cross fire. Federal agents reportedly stop their fire briefly as motorists pass through.

✓ The two suspects continue firing as they attempt to commandeer one of the FBI cars parked behind them. Both die in a final burst of bullets while trying to jump into the front seat of the car from opposite sides. Some of the final shots are fired by wounded agents sprawled on the ground.

✓ A lone FBI agent stands uninjured as the roar of weapons dies and as Metro police began arriving. It is roughly 9:40 a.m.

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

THE MIAMI NEWS Miami,

Page 5A

Date:

Edition: METRO

April 16, 1986

Title:

Character:

or

Classification:

Submitting Office: MIAMI

Indexing:

FBI agent saluted at funeral

FBI Director William Webster, delivering a eulogy in St. Albans, W.Va., yesterday at the funeral of Jerry Dove, one of two agents killed in a Kendall shoot-out last Friday, called his killers "brutal, ruthless people." Webster pledged an intensive investigation into the backgrounds of William Malix and Michael Platt, the two who killed Dove and fellow agent Benjamin Grogan. Webster called Dove "one who lived to see his childhood dreams come true."

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

FBI created in 1908 28 agents slain since

By Katie Springer

Associated Press

The shooting deaths of two FBI agents Friday brings to 28 the number of agents who have died in the line of duty since the bureau began in 1908, officials in Washington said.

It was the first time since 1979 that two agents were killed in a single incident.

Previously, the worst day of violence in FBI history was Aug. 8, 1979, when three agents were killed in two

Los Angeles, were gunned down when they went to a house on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. One Indian died in a shoot-out that followed the slayings.

Last year, a female agent who had just completed her training was cut down by bullets from two of her fellow officers, who mistook her for a suspect's girlfriend.

Robin Ahrens, 33, was the first female agent to die on duty. She was killed in Phoenix on Oct. 6, 1986.

separate shoot-outs.

Agent Jonnie L. Oliver, 36, was shot in Cleveland by a Boeing kidnapping and robbery suspect.

The same day, in El Centro, Calif., Clerger social worker broke into an FBI office and gunned down two agents near their desks. The man got a pistol to his mouth and killed himself after being wounded by a dying agent. The agents killed were J. Robert Parker, 46, and Charles W. Elmore, 35.

A year later, FBI Director William Webster led a

nationwide memorial to the "tragic day" in FBI history.

The first killing of an FBI agent took place in 1925, and several more agents died during "the gangster years of the 1930s," said FBI spokesman Bill Carter in Washington.

Another dark time in FBI history was June 1978, when two agents were killed in Oglala, S.D., after they tried to deliver a warrant at an Indian reservation.

Jack Coler and Ronald Williams, both 38, and from

Prints page, name of
spcl, city and state.)

SUN SENTINEL

Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

Date Page 8A

Edition:

BROWARD

April 12, 1986

Title:

Character:

or

Classification:

Submitting Office:

MIAMI

Indicia:

Here are lawmen who were killed, wounded

• Benjamin T. Grogan, 53, a 25-year veteran of the bureau. Dead at the scene.

• Jerry Dove, 30, a special agent since 1982. Dead at the scene.

• Special Agent Gordon G. McNeill, 43, a 19-year veteran. He was listed in serious condition at Baptist Hospital in Miami.

McNeill's name arose during the Operation Airlift case in Fort Lauderdale involving corrupted FBI Agent Daniel A. Mitrione Jr. of Cooper City. McNeill had been Mitrione's supervisor during the undercover drug investigation.

• Edmundo Mireles Jr., 33, a special agent since 1979. He was in serious condition at South Miami Hospital with shotgun wounds to his left arm and face.

• Special Agent John F. Malón Jr., 48, a member of the bureau since 1963. He was in serious condition at Baptist Hospital.

• Special Agent Richard A. Massucco, 43, who has 15 years of



Benjamin T. Grogan

bureau service. He was treated for minor injuries and released from Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami.

• Special Agent Gilbert M.



Jerry Dove

Drantia, 27, who has been on active duty since April 1981. He was treated for minor injuries and released from Jackson Memorial Hospital.

FBI director can't recall so many agents hit at once

By TOM BOWMAN
States News Service

WASHINGTON — The Kendall gun battle that claimed the lives of two FBI agents and seriously wounded three others left FBI Director William Webster unable "to recall so many agents killed and injured in a single incident."

"Today's tragedy is a severely felt loss to the FBI," Webster said at a news conference. Other bloody shoot-outs, killing a total of 27 agents, have marked the bureau's 78-year history, including a summer day six years ago when the FBI lost three agents in two separate shootings.

On the morning of Aug. 10, 1973, agent Johnnie L. Oliver was killed by gunfire when he tried to catch a fugitive in Cleveland. About the same time that day, at the FBI office in El Centro, Calif., a man strolled in without warning and fatally shot agents J. Robert Porter and Charles Elmore.

The first double slaying of FBI agents took place on Nov. 27, 1934, at the hands of a notorious gangster, George "Baby Face" Nelson.

Inspector Samuel Cowley and agent Herman E. Hollis caught up with Nelson and a cohort outside Barrington, Ill. In the ensuing gun battle, Hollis was killed instantly and Cowley lingered for a day. Nelson, whose real name was Lester Gillis, also was fatally wounded in the exchange of fire.

After those deaths, the FBI would not experience another double killing until Jan. 8, 1959. When agents Anthony Palmitano and Edwin R. Woodruff entered an apartment house in Washington in search of an escaped prisoner, they were met in the hallway by the fugitive, who blazed away with his pistol.

Another double slaying took place on June 25, 1975, when two FBI men were ambushed and killed on the Oglala Sioux Indian Reservation at Pine Ridge, S.D. The agents, Jack Coley and Ronald Williams, were there to make arrests for crimes committed on the reservation.

The 1930s was the bloodiest decade for the agency. Eight agents were slain during those years, many of them by gangsters that terrorized the Midwest.

With a burst of machine-gun fire, Charles "Pretty Boy" Floyd murdered agent Raymond Caffrey during the "Kansas City Massacre" on June 17, 1933, in an attempt to free a fellow criminal from law enforcement officials.

The first death of a "G-Man" occurred in 1925, one year after J. Edgar Hoover took over the bureau and 17 years after it was founded as the Bureau of Investigation.

On the night of Oct. 11, 1925, agent Edwin C. Shanahan drew his gun and approached a dimly lit Chicago garage to arrest a car thief. Before the agent

FBI Agents Killed

1. Edwin Shanahan	Oct. 11, 1925
2. Paul Reynolds	Aug. 9, 1929
3. Raymond Caffrey	June 17, 1933
4. W. Carter Baum	April 22, 1934
5. Herman Hollis	Nov. 27, 1934
6. Samuel Cowley	Nov. 28, 1934
7. Nelson B. Klein	Aug. 16, 1935
8. Wimberly Baker	April 17, 1937
9. Truett E. Rowe	June 1, 1937
10. William Ramsey Jr.	May 3, 1938
11. Hubert Tracy	March 13, 1942
12. Joseph Brock	July 26, 1952
13. J. Brady Murphy	Sept. 26, 1963
14. Richard Moran	April 18, 1957
15. Terry R. Anderson	May 17, 1968
16. Douglas Price	April 25, 1968
17. A. Palmisano	Jan. 8, 1969
18. Edwin Woodruffe	Jan. 8, 1969
19. Gregory Spinnell	March 15, 1973
20. Ronald Williams	June 26, 1975
21. Jack R. Coler	June 26, 1975
22. Trenwith Basford	Aug. 25, 1977
23. Mark Kirkland	Aug. 25, 1977
24. Johnnie Oliver	Aug. 10, 1978
25. J. Robert Porter	Aug. 10, 1978
26. Charles Elmore	Aug. 10, 1978
27. Robin Ahrens	Oct. 4, 1985
28. Benjamin Grogan	April 11, 1986
29. Gerald Dove	April 11, 1986

SOURCE: FBI

could act, the thief pulled an automatic pistol from his Packard and fired, striking Shanahan, 31, in the chest and killing him instantly.

Friday's deaths came six months after the last agent was killed. Robin Ahrens, 33, was shot Oct. 4 last year in Phoenix by fellow agents who mistook her for the friend of a robbery suspect. She became the first female agent slain in the bureau's history.

SECTION C-
THE WOUNDED

The wounded

Survivors had decades of experience

The FBI agents wounded in Friday's shoot-out are a varied group who have worked together from time to time. Together, they have more than 50 years' experience in law enforcement.

• Gordon McNeil, 43, is a supervisory special agent. He was the lead agent in the bank robbery investigation that resulted in the shoot-out, and he has been with the bureau for 19 years.

"He's a great guy," Assistant U.S. Attorney Myles Malman said Friday night. "He once wrote a letter of recommendation for me. He was busy and he didn't have to do it. But he's that kind of guy."

McNeil is the father of two.

• Special Agent John Hanlon is known to almost everyone by the nickname Jake. He's 48, and regarded as a tireless field agent who doesn't mind the long days and crazy hours.

Somehow, despite the demands of the job, he found time to get a law degree. Just a few months ago, he took the Florida Bar exam. He has been a special agent since 1963.

• Edmundo Mireles, 33, is a special agent who joined the bureau in 1979. He worked with Benjamin Grogan, one of the two agents killed Friday, in several kidnapping investigations. His biggest case was the 1983 kidnapping of the wife of a former ambassador to the United States. Mireles served as the lead agent of the Washington, D.C., field office in that investigation.

• Special Agents Gilbert Orrantia, 27, and Richard A. Mansuetti, 43, have been with the FBI for four years and 15 years, respectively. They were treated for their injuries Friday at South Dade hospitals and returned to their homes.



Mine workers push one of the 400 cars of iron ore up the incline to waiting helicopter.

The Associated Press

5 more lawmen injured

Rock pit murder link / 22A

Agents remembered / 22A

Worst day for FBI / 24A

Violence touches all / 1B

By MARC FISHER
and JAMES A. FUSELL
Herald Staff Writers

Two FBI agents and two bank robbery suspects were killed and five more FBI men were wounded Friday morning when a wild shoot-out — the most devastating in FBI history — erupted on a residential street in Kendall.

More than 100 shots from automatic weapons, shotguns and pistols tore across the suburban Miami street just south of the Sunland Shopping Plaza. The shooting, which started at about 9:35 a.m., lasted more than five minutes.

Agents in front of a white house at 32201 SW 82nd Ave. tried to protect themselves with big white bullet-proof blocs — to no avail. When it was over, only one of eight FBI agents emerged unscathed.

Both robbers — who were driving a car they had stolen from a man they had robbed and shot at a West Dade rock pit last month — were sprawled in the street, dead.

So were the two agents who had chased the suspects up South Dixie Highway, behind the Dixie Belle shopping center and onto the narrow street of large, single-story homes.

The two slain agents were identified as Benjamin Grogan, 33, an FBI man for nearly 20 years, and Gerald Dove, 30, an agent since 1982.

Five more FBI agents who had responded almost immediately to a call for help were shot. Three of them seriously injured. Agents

Please turn to SHOOTING / 22A

4 die in bloody Kendall shoot-out

It's FBI's darkest tragedy

SHOOTING / from 1A

John Hanlon, 48, who suffered a gunshot wound to his thigh, and Gordon McNeil, 43, shot in the chest, were at Baptist Hospital, where both were listed in serious condition.

At South Miami Hospital, agent Edmundo Mireles, 31, was in critical but stable condition with a bullet wound to his left forearm.

Two other agents — Richard Mansard, 43, and Gilbert Orrantia, 27 — were treated at Baptist for surface wounds and were released, the FBI said.

"This went down so fast it was unbelievable," said witness Billie Holloway, who lives down the block from the crime scene. "We heard a few shots and then a little quiet. We went outside and heard the car crash. Then the shots just opened up."

"Living in Miami, you know, mind Vice, I figured it was another drug bust," Holloway said. "It's Miami. You just try to stay alive."

The FBI men were the 28th and 29th agents to be killed in the line of duty. The last time two FBI agents were killed in a single incident was in 1979.

In Washington, FBI Director William Webster called Friday the darkest day in the agency's history. Never before had so many agents been killed or wounded in one incident.

"Miami has had a very difficult time — a lot of different problems," Webster said. But, he added, "I would certainly not characterize it as a place to stay away from."

Along 52nd Avenue, there were bullet holes everywhere. In the sides of cars, in the concrete wall behind the shopping center.

Thought it was war

"Phil Doucette had just come on when it happened," said May Stamat, who lives nearby. "I thought it was a war."

Using fingerprints, Metro detectives identified the robbers as William Matix, 34, and Michael Lee Platt, 32, both of South Dade. The men were suspects in two robberies of the Barnett Bank branch at 13593 South Dixie Highway earlier this year.

Property records show that Matix and Platt each owned a three-bedroom, two-bathroom \$100,000 home. Matix's has a patio, central air-conditioning and a six-foot-deep pool.

Police said Matix and Platt were members of the Rock Pit Gang, a small, ruthless group of criminals whose robberies have terrorized armored car drivers, bank customers and target shooters in Dade since at least October 1985.

Neither Matix nor Platt had ever been arrested either in Dade County or anywhere in the nation, police said late Friday night.

On Jan. 10, Matix and Platt are believed to have shot a Brink's guard, Ernesto Maranje, at the Barnett branch. Left for dead, Maranje is recovering from the wounds. Both times they hit Barnett, the robbers escaped in a gold Monte Carlo.

Pickup sought

Friday night, Metro police were searching for another stolen vehicle, a white 1984 Ford 150 pickup, license tag 538CUW. The pickup, like the Monte Carlo driven by the slain robbers, was stolen by members of the Rock Pit Gang.

According to police and witnesses, this is what happened:

FBI agents — part of a joint FBI-Metro police investigation of bank and armored car robberies — staked out several South Dade banks Friday morning, expecting

members of the Rock Pit Gang to rob one. The gang liked to hit banks on Fridays, said Joseph Corless, special agent in charge of the Miami FBI office.

Agents Grogan and Dove saw a dark Chevrolet Monte Carlo pass by the bank they were watching several times.

Suspicious, they fell in behind the car and followed. One of the agents realized that the Monte Carlo was stolen from the victim of the March 12 robbery at a rock pit at SW 18th Street and 157th Avenue.

They checked records and confirmed that the Monte Carlo belonged to the rock pit victim, Joe Collazo. The FBI had its men.

The agents chased the Monte Carlo north on South Dixie Highway between SW 132nd and 134th Streets.

Called for help

"The agents called for help, for assistance and sometime after they felt they had sufficient backup they attempted to make the arrest," Corless said.

After radioing for help, the two agents chased the suspects' car north, zigzagging on side streets, then heading north onto SW 82nd Avenue. Several witnesses said they heard volleys of gunfire as the cars zoomed up the street.

As the Monte Carlo reached SW 122nd Street, the suspects saw another FBI vehicle, a gray car, coming at them from the north. Surrounded, the men panicked and slammed into a black olive tree in front of the house at 12201 SW 82nd Ave.

As the car stopped, the suspects jumped out and opened fire with .223-caliber automatic weapons.

The two FBI agents who had originally spotted the pair had pulled their cream-colored Buick in behind the Monte Carlo. They died getting out of their cars.

Witness Pam Johnson said she saw a man dressed in olive fatigues, apparently one of the suspects, run across a lawn holding a weapon "like a submachine gun. Then he just started firing. The other guys behind the car



started shooting at him, and then it was a gun battle."

Saw cars crash

Johnson, who was working at a gallery across the street from the shoot-out, said she saw two FBI cars crash, ending up in a V-formation behind the robbers' car. When she saw one of the robbers coming toward her with an automatic weapon, Johnson ducked behind her turquoise 1973 BMW.

"I've never seen gunfire before," she said. "I've never seen men die. At first I didn't believe it. I've seen no television-conditioned that I didn't know what danger I was in. And then it hit me. I thought, 'My God, I'm ducking behind my car for my life.'

"My husband came 15 or 20 minutes after it happened, and he said, 'That's it. It's time to get out of Miami.'"

FBI agents across the street from the robbers tried to hide behind cars and white bulletproof shields. At least two FBI agents held their fire to let motorists pass by; the suspects showed no such courtesy.

"I heard an automobile crash, then I heard eight gunfire," said Bob Stebbins, who lives three

doors from the shoot-out and was working on the tulips in his garden when he heard the crash.

"I saw somebody sitting behind a car with a gun. I didn't know what the hell was going on. I saw the guy [an agent] get hit, in the street. He was like a beached whale. He rolled back and started flopping back and forth. God, it was awful."

Stebbins saw another agent shot: "He just went down like a jackknife — boom. He was still alive and he kept popping up and firing, going down again, popping up and firing.

"It looked like a visit to Tamiami Gun Shop," Stebbins said. "When you look at what these robbers had in the way of guns, I feel that our law enforcement officers are at a tremendous disadvantage. Geez, they could have taken Fort Knox with what they had."

Rescue units began arriving at 9:42. An air rescue helicopter arrived at 9:51 and took two of the seriously injured agents to Baptist Hospital.

Throughout the shoot-out, girls at the Momentum School of Dance, separated from the bloody scene only by two concrete walls, kept going through their ballet steps, smiling into the mirrors along the wall.

Outside, witnesses yelled to customers driving out of the Farm Store three doors away from the shoot-out.

"Don't drive through there, they're all shooting," one woman shouted. But shoppers ignored her. "These idiots just kept driving," Holloway said.

For nearly four hours after the shoot-out, the bodies, two 12-gauge pump shotguns and two pistols lay scattered in the street, near pools of blood and cars riddled with bullet holes. The agents were covered with yellow plastic sheets. The robbers lay exposed to the hot sun, their clothes drenched in darkened blood.

Drew a picture

A 9-year-old boy, Jamie Harper,

slipped back and forth through the police line, then sat down with a magic marker and a piece of paper to draw a picture of the scene.

"It gives me cold chills," he said. "I was crying. Not for myself, but for the men who were hurt and dead in the street."

Parents brought little children up a ramp of a parking garage to see the crime scene, where more than 100 federal agents, Metro police, state troopers and other investigators milled about.

At 12:55 p.m., the two slain agents were picked up in separate black hearses. The bodies of the suspects were loaded into a blue van.

Metro police brought in the Ceniac unit, a special squad that investigates organized crime and homicide cases, to interview the unburied FBI agents for nearly two hours.

"These guys were good guys, these guys were my friends," said Assistant U.S. Attorney Gregory Kabae, who left a trial to go to the scene of the shoot-out.

FBI Director Webster, asked whether the robbers are members of Aryan Nation, the neo-Nazi group responsible for robberies and shootings in Western states, said, "We don't have enough information to make a definitive statement... but we are looking at this aspect very, very closely."

Not on rolls

A spokeswoman for the Aryan Church of Jesus Christ Christian in Hayden Lake, Idaho — sometimes referred to as the Aryan Nation — said neither Matrix nor Platt are listed on the group's membership rolls.

Platt has a wife, a teen-age stepson and three pre-teen children by a previous marriage, said the woman who rents a Southwest Dade home from the slain robber.

"He was an all-around nice person," she said, adding that Platt has driven several different cars in his monthly visits to collect the rent. "He's an excellent landlord."

Witnesses said a frustrated officer vented his feelings on the corpse of a robber.

"One of the detectives, a guy in a striped shirt, started kicking the fat guy in the head, kicked him three or four times just out of frustration, and another officer pulled him away," said witness Michael Budwig.

Another witness, Sonny Nomes, said she saw a police officer approach one of the dead robbers and start "kicking him in the side, enough to break his ribs. He kicked him again and again. He wouldn't stop."

Nomes' son, Jamie Harper, said "They just kicked him and left him there. It seemed like they didn't care about the bad guy."

No comment

"I wouldn't even dignify that with a comment," said FBI spokesman Paul Miller.

Police also arrested Miami Herald photographer Albert Coya and New York Times reporter Joseph Treaster. Coya was charged with trespass after warning and with obstructing a police officer. Police said Treaster slipped past the police line, stepped on a handgun and kicked shell casings around.

Doctors at Baptist and South Miami hospitals were encouraged by the conditions of the injured agents late Friday.

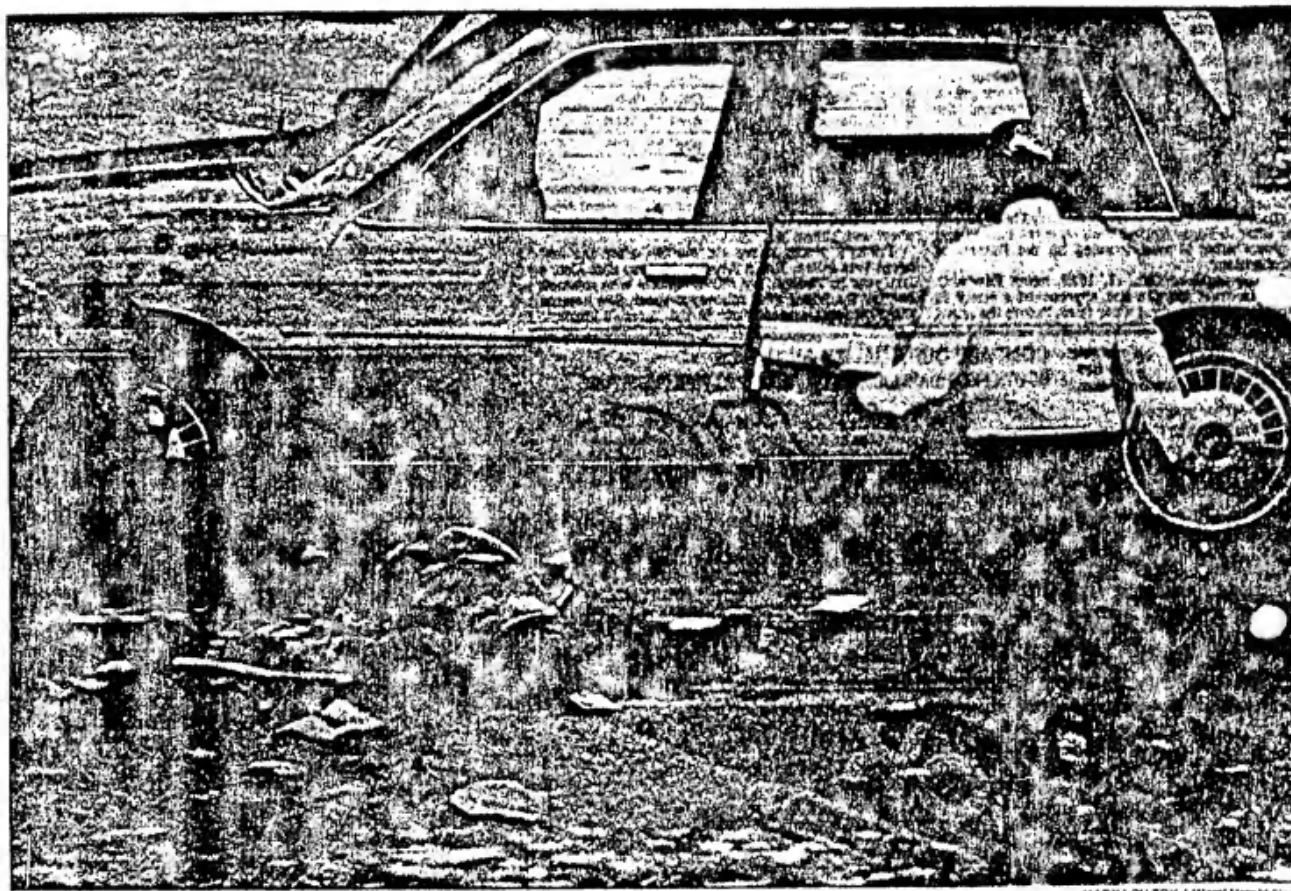
Dr. Gerald Young, trauma surgeon at Baptist, said, "Fortunately, they were brought here in a timely fashion. Neither does has life-threatening injuries."

Agent Hanlon was in "good spirits," Young said. "He has been medicated for pain, but he has seen his wife and he seems quite happy." Hanlon and McNeil also suffered hand injuries.

The next 24 to 48 hours are crucial," Young said. "No bullets have been removed."

McNeil's daughter, an eighth-grader, said, "My daddy was really worried. He really cares about his agents. He wanted them to be all right."

Herald staff writers Andrus Viguerie, Brian Duffy, Todd Sonthago, Jeff Leen, Al Messerschmidt, Susan Sacks and Phil Kuntz contributed to this report.



One of the two suspects lies dead in the road, surrounded by bloodstains and debris.

MARY LOU FOY / Miami Herald Staff

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

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newspaper, city and state.)

THE MIAMI HERALD

Miami, Florida

Page 1A

Date

Edition

April 14, 1986

Title

Character

or

Classification

Submitting Office

MIAMI

Indexing

Meese visits agents, backs actions



In Meese visits Baptist Hospital Sunday with Joseph V. Corless, special FBI agent in charge of the Miami field office.

Wounded FBI men 'in very good spirits'

Hisasen's view / 1B

By BRIAN DUFFY
Herald Staff Writer

Attorney General Edwin Meese flew to Miami on Sunday to visit three FBI agents hospitalized with injuries from last week's gun battle with two bank robbery suspects.

Planked by Leon B. Kellner, U.S. attorney for South Florida, and Joseph V. Corless, special agent in charge of the FBI's Miami field office, Meese told reporters that the agents used proper procedure

when they stopped the two suspects on a suburban street near Miami.

He said the wounded agents are feeling better.

"They both seem to be doing well and they're in very good spirits," Meese said after chat with special agents George McNeill and John Hanlon in a critical care unit of Baptist Hospital. "I just told them how grateful to them we were."

Afterward, a four-car motorcade took Meese to South Miami.

Please turn to Page 1B

Meese visits FBI agents, backs shoot-out actions

By FELL from LA

Hospital, where special agent Ed Mireles is being treated for a serious arm injury. Doctors upgraded Mireles' condition from serious to fair Sunday, and FBI agents who know him said Mireles was feeling better.

Later in the day, doctors upgraded the conditions of Hanlon and McNeill. They were described as being in good condition and were moved from the critical unit upstairs, where they will share a large private room.

Mireles, McNeill and Hanlon were among five FBI agents wounded in the shoot-out. Special agents Benjamin P. Grogan and Gerald Dove were killed. So were the bank robbery suspects, William Matix and Michael Lee Platt. It was the worst shooting in the

history of the FBI.

The tragedy drew hundreds of family members, friends and well-wishers to a viewing and rosary for Grogan Sunday. FBI spokesman Paul Miller said more than 500 people came to two viewings at Bennett & Sons funeral home, 15201 NW Seventh Ave. and that Gov. Bob Graham had spent 30 minutes with Grogan's widow, Sandra.

As rain began to fall Sunday evening, a mile-long motorcade traveled slowly from the funeral home to a rosary service at Visitation Catholic Church, in North Dade where Grogan had worshipped. Escorted by dozens of Metro officers and Florida Highway Patrol troopers, about 50 private cars followed two limousines carrying Grogan's immediate family members and a hearse

bearing the agent's body.

Grogan's funeral will be today at 1 p.m. and Miller said FBI Director William Webster would attend.

Meese, in response to reporters' questions about procedures the agents used in attempting to arrest Matix and Platt, said, "It's just too bad that these two people were such vicious killers that they were able to kill two very good agents."

"This was simply a surveillance situation, and the severity of the situation, was not something that could be anticipated," Meese said. He said an FBI inspection team, which arrived in Miami during the weekend, would review the agents' procedures and all the circumstances surrounding the shooting. He predicted that the inspection would find that the agents acted properly and with

suitable caution.

FBI agents and others familiar with the shoot-out said the agents on the scene exercised restraint and were careful not to shoot when passers-by were in the line of fire.

The shoot-out occurred at about 9:30 Friday morning. Agents Grogan and Dove had been conducting a routine search for a stolen maroon Monte Carlo believed to have been used by a gang of bank robbers. The agents spotted the car heading north on South Dixie Highway, somewhere between 132nd and 134th streets. Matix and Platt were in it.

A chase ensued.

The agents radioed for support from six other agents in three cars nearby. When they turned off Dixie and onto 82nd Avenue, Matix and Platt began firing.

Grogan and Dove fell dead.

Agents Mireles, McNeill, Hanson, Richard Mansauzi and Gilbert Orranta were wounded. Mansauzi and Orranta were treated and released from hospitals Friday. Only one agent, Ron Reisner, escaped unharmed.

"These were very fine agents and very brave men," Meese said Sunday. "This kind of situation indicates the kind of danger faced by all law-enforcement agents."

Meese said the FBI would be paying the medical bills for all the wounded agents. And Robert Rees, associate administrator of Baptist, said anything not covered by the bureaus would be paid by the hospital. Anything the agents want, Rees said, they can have — "even a lobster dinner."

Herald staff writer Patrick May contributed to this report.

(Indicate page, name of
newspaper, city and state.)**SUN SENTINEL**

Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

Date: Page 3A

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Title:

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Meese visits FBI agents

Mourns the 2 who were slain

By Jonathan Siskind

(Associated Press)

MIAMI — Mourning the "two very brave" FBI agents killed in a shoot-out Friday, U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese paid a visit Sunday to three agents wounded in the gunfire.

Meese praised the agents' actions in what has been called the worst day in FBI history. Four people, including two bank robbery suspects, were killed and five agents were wounded.

FBI Director William Webster is scheduled to attend the funeral today in Miami for Benjamin T. Grogan, one of the slain agents, officials said.

Meese said the agents "did an excellent job" and "took the necessary actions" to stop Michael Platt and William R. Matix, suspected of murder, attempted murders and at least six bank and armored car robberies in Dade County since last fall.

Eight agents were staking out four banks in the south Dade community of Kendall on Friday morning. One team of agents saw a car matching one reported stolen after an attempted murder in March.

The agents radioed Metro-Dade Police for help as they chased the car on U.S. 1 and then onto a shady residential street, where the battle occurred.

When it was over, Grogan, 53, a 25-year veteran of the agency, and Jerry Dove, 39, a lawyer turned lawman, were dead.

Wounded were supervisory special agent Gordon McNeill, 42, and special agents John Hanlon, 48, Edmundo Mireles, 33, Richard Mansuetti, 43, and Gilbert Ortantia, 37.

Mireles, shot in the left arm, reportedly fired the blasts that killed Matix and Platt, who tried to escape in an FBI car.

Miller would not say whether the owner of the stolen car had identified Matix, 32, and Platt, 35, as the men who stole it and shot him, leaving him for dead at a West Dade rockpit March 11.

Meese said the agents could not have prepared themselves for the gunbattle beforehand by getting hairspray.



The Associated Press
Edwin Meese leaves Baptist Hospital after visiting wounded agents. Behind him is Joseph Corless, special agent in charge of the FBI's Miami office.

"The severity of the incident is not something that could be anticipated," Meese said, noting that the FBI does stock high-powered weapons. The agents "just happened to come up on" the suspects, he said.

Platt and Matix had a Colt AR-15 assault rifle and a Ruger Mini-14 semi-automatic rifle. One agent had a shotgun and the rest had standard-issue handguns.

Officials said the deaths and injuries made it the worst gunbattle in the FBI's 76-year history, bringing to 29 the number of agents killed on duty.

Meese said the three agents he visited were in good spirits.

"I just told them how grateful we were for their courageous actions," Meese told reporters at Baptist Hospital after spending about 20 minutes with McNeill and Hanlon.

Both are in serious but stable condition in the critical care unit after surgery to repair hand wounds. McNeill also has a chest wound and Hanlon has a thigh wound, a hospital spokeswoman said.

At South Miami Hospital, Meese spoke about 10 minutes with Mireles, 33, and said he told the agent he was "grateful for his heroic work."

Mireles is in fair condition after surgery to repair his fractured left arm and remove shotgun pellets from his forehead, a hospital spokesman said.

Special agents Manauzzi and Orrantia were treated for minor injuries and released from Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami.

Grogan's funeral is set for 1 p.m. at Visitation Catholic Church in Miami, with Archbishop Edward McCarthy officiating.

Dove, an agent since 1982 and former special counsel for the West Virginia State Police, will be buried Tuesday in St. Albans, W.Va.

Meese was accompanied by Deputy Attorney General Lowell Jensen, FBI Assistant Executive Director Oliver Revell, Joseph Corless, special agent in charge of the FBI's Miami office, and Leon Kellner, U.S. attorney for the southern district of Florida.

This report was supplemented by San-Sentinel wire services.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state)
THE MIAMI HERALD
 Miami, Florida
 Date Page 1A
 Editor: April 17, 1986

Scared daughter

Teen's FBI father survived — but it was a nightmare

By JILL SAVITT
 Herald Writer

Suzanne McNeill, who will be 17 on Friday, was born into an FBI family. A photo of her father shaking hands with bureau director William Webster decorates a wall in her South Dade home.

Last Friday, though, Suzanne learned that being the daughter of FBI Special Agent Gordon McNeill can involve fear, anxiety and heartache — as well as pride.

As Suzanne sat in her fourth-period class at Palmetto Senior

High School, a nightmare slowly, dreadfully unfolded.

Shirley Yaskin's journalism class was interrupted by two students bringing news: There had been a deadly shoot-out just a few blocks away. Yaskin warned her class to avoid the area around Southwest 124th Street and 82nd Avenue during the lunch break.

"I heard people talking," said Suzanne, a senior, at her home this week. "I just heard pieces of a conversation — two agents

Please turn to DAUGHTER / 6A



Suzanne McNeill: 'You never feel it can happen to you.'

Daughter recalls FBI nightmare

DAUGHTER / from IA

She killed. I looked up and said, 'What? What? What happened?'

"I immediately got nervous. I said, 'My dad, it's my dad's case. So I thought I'd call the fice to see if everything was OK.'

She used the phone in the journalism classroom to contact her father's office.

"No one wanted to tell me the news,"

Anne said. "They connected me to a whole bunch of people. I said, 'This is Suzanne McNeill. May I speak to Gordon McNeill, please?'

"'Oh,' they said, 'what do you want?'

"I said I wanted to speak to him. They got nervous. ... Finally some lady got on, and I said, 'Where's my father?'

"She said, 'I know you're upset. Your father's OK. He's in the hospital; we're sending agent to come get you.'

"At that point, I figured they just weren't lying me. I thought he was dead and they didn't want to tell me over the phone."

As she ran down a school hallway to meet the agent, she thought, "My God, this isn't happening to me. This only happens in movies," she said.

"The thought of my father's life being in danger never even occurred to me. I know his job is dangerous and I know the people he works with are dangerous people. You never know if it can happen to you."

The agent took her to Baptist Hospital, where her father, a 19-year FBI veteran, received emergency treatment for a chest wound and hand injuries suffered in a gun battle with two armored-car and bank robbers, William Matix and Michael Lee Platt.

The robbers and two FBI special agents, James Grogan and Gerald Dove, were killed. McNeill and four other agents were wounded.

The first family member to see Gordon McNeill, Suzanne watched her father being heeled into an X-ray room on a gurney.

Her mother, Elaine McNeill, was next to her. Later, Suzanne's 13-year-old sister, Jill, and an aunt arrived at the hospital.

"I saw him in really bad shape — all bloody and everything. That was scary," Suzanne said. "It was scary — seeing my big, strong dad helpless. It was totally different than I'd ever seen him. I felt relief, but love, because he

"It was scary — seeing my big, strong dad helpless. It was totally different than I'd ever seen him."

Suzanne McNeill

was there and everything was OK."

"When I think about what could have happened ... my dad could easily have been Mr. Grogan or Mr. Dove. I just keep saying to myself, he's so lucky. We're so lucky."

Suzanne's mother said that as her husband left home Friday morning she intuitively felt there would be a break in the case.

"For some reason, just because he was going out Friday — I mean he had such a personal vendetta against these people because they were so bad," Mrs. McNeill said.

"It wasn't doom; it was just realizing that if and when they did catch up with these two that probably something would happen," said Mrs. McNeill, who worked for eight years as a secretary for the FBI.

As Suzanne spoke Tuesday afternoon, she sat comfortably on the living room couch. No lights were on. Suzanne's blond, almost white, hair and pink sweater stood out in the shadows of the earth-tone room.

On a table rested two remote-control units — for one television. "We're all too lazy to get up and change the channel," Suzanne said. "Anyway, one's broken and Dad's not home to fix it."

The table's centerpiece was a fresh flower arrangement. More flowers, along with fruit baskets and gifts, ringed the room. One gift card was signed by Miami Vice star Don Johnson. Another was from the parents of Beth Keyton, a victim of sex-killer Christopher Wilder. Gordon McNeill worked on the Wilder investigation.

In the immediate aftermath of the Friday's shooting, Suzanne said, "It was crazy" — but now she can reflect on and talk about what happened.

"On Friday I felt relief, pure relief," she said. "On Saturday it was grief. It was a total change. On Friday, I was happy for him just to be alive. And then Saturday I realized what it

would do to him mentally. My father I even though it wasn't his fault. Those friends."

Suzanne said her father had never been danger and frustrations of his job with his family life.

"Sometimes I think my dad and agent are two different people. I have respect for him now. I didn't realize scary," she said.

"He is funny, so funny. Everybody him. When we got all the calls and people writing and visiting. I respected much because of how I saw other respected him," she said.

Suzanne remembers her father's antics at her birthday party when she was in the eighth grade. "He came out on the a blonde curly wig and a pink tutu — to embarrass me," she said.

"I have so much more respect now because I realize the great deal of pressure responsibilities he has on his mind these. You can't pack that up at 5 o'clock house," Suzanne said.

"He was the supervisor of the case. He was really hurt about the two others. They were his friends and his co-workers."

"The really strange thing is that Matix, lives nine blocks away. My after him for so long, chasing him around town, and he probably passed him on Suzanne said.

Mrs. McNeill said her husband's decision to set up a stakeout Friday for Matix was "nothing more than just an hunch on his part."

"But, knowing how bad they were, it was possible, just possible they could them — never dreaming this could

While recuperating from his wounding, Special Agent McNeill has described to the emotional trauma of being shot.

"He told me that he was lying on the ground thinking that he was paralyzed Suzanne said. "He didn't think he was. He said all he could think about was mom and my sister."

Suzanne's perception of her father's condition has changed.

"At school, people have always said 'oh wow.' And I always responded, 'That's a big deal.' But it is a big deal and I never what was really involved."

SECTION D-
THE SUBJECTS
WILLIAM RUSSELL MATIX
MICHAEL PLATT

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Two slain suspects led ordinary lives

FBI handles grief 13A

By Jack Brennan
Staff Writer

MIAMI — Until 12 hours after the gunbattle, investigators were convinced the two men slain in a shoot-out with FBI agents would turn out to be hardened desperadoes with lengthy criminal records.

Now, the investigators say, they are trying to figure out why two men who led seemingly ordinary lives would go on a six-month rampage of robbery and shooting within a few miles of their comfortable south Dade County homes.

"As far as we can tell, they had no criminal record. There's nothing overt in their backgrounds to indicate they would do things like this," Metro-Dade homicide Sgt. John Methvin said Saturday.

Police said that on the surface, there appears to have been nothing unusual about the lives led by the two men, who were killed Friday in the south Dade community of Kendall after they murdered two FBI agents and wounded five others.

"What they did is completely out of character and abnormal to the type of lives they were leading," said Metro-Dade police Sgt. Terry Monheim, of the robbery division. "Obviously, these guys were very strange people, but their life was normal. I don't understand it."

Police identified the two gunmen as Michael Platt, 32, of the 15600 block of Southwest 84th Lane, and William R. Matix, 34, of the 15600 block of Southwest 84th Avenue.

A joint FBI-Metro-Dade police task force is trying to link the men. Please see FBI, 13A

(Indicate page, name of
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SUN SENTINEL
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Continued from page 1A
to the murder, two attempted murders and at least six robberies of armored cars and banks in Dade County since last fall.

Mr. Kurland, whose house is across the street from Platte's, said Platte, his wife and their four children had been living in the \$12,000, two-story home for about a year.

He said he never noticed anything unusual going on, although the Platte did not associate with the mainly older people on the block.

"I don't think there's any of us who really knows anything about them. They were young, in their 30s, and we're grandma-grandpa type. We keep to ourselves," Kurland said.

Platte was engaged to be married and also lived in an expensive home, said Sgt. Methvin, who pointed out that the men's houses did not match up with the way they were supposed to be earning their living.

"They were not gainfully employed. They had some kind of small landscaping firm," he said. "Now, from what I understand, they owned their homes."

FBI spokesman Paul Miller did rule out the possibility the two were connected to the Aryan Brotherhood, a neo-Nazi group that has been linked to robberies and shootings in western states.

At this point, there's no indication they're connected to any terrorist organization," he said.

The FBI and Metro-Dade police

were still working Saturday to piece together details of the shoot-out, additional background on the suspects and any links to the robbers and prior shootings.

Miller said a forensic science team was gathering evidence from the stolen Monte Carlo the suspects were driving Friday and that a "shooting team" was reconstructing details of the gunbattle.

Sgt. Methvin said tests were also scheduled to be done soon on the suspects' weapons, a shotgun and a semi-automatic rifle similar to ones used in the robberies and prior shootings.

Killed in the shoot-out — the bloodiest in FBI history — were agents Benjamin T. Grogan, 53, a 25-year FBI veteran, and Jerry Deve, 30, who had been with the FBI since 1962.

Still in serious but stable condition Saturday were two of the three wounded agents. Gordon McNeill, 43, and John Hanlon, 44, were at Baptist Hospital.

Edmundo Mireles Jr., 33, was in fair condition at South Miami Hospital. Two other agents were treated for minor wounds and released Friday from Jackson Memorial Hospital.

Two-man FBI teams had staked out four banks in the Kendall area Friday morning, looking for the Monte Carlo stolen after its owner was shot at a west Dade rockpit March 12.

A gunfight and chase began after the car was seen by one of the teams. All eight agents converged on the car as they radioed Metro-Dade police for help.

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state:
THE MIAMI HERALD
Miami, Florida
Page 1A

Date
Edition

BROWARD,
April 13, 1986

Title

Character
or
Classification
Submitting Office

MIAMI

Indexing

FBI killers

were

‘family men’

The slain agents / 7A

Assassins-by gawk / 10A

By JEFF LEVIN and BRIAN DUFFY

Special Staff Writers
William R. Matix, the man who brutally unloaded down two FBI agents and wounded several others in the worst shooting in the bureau's history, was a born-again Christian who liked to give testimony in church about the memory of his dead wife.

The highlight of Matix's testimony would come when he pinched out a candle's flame with his fingers to illustrate the certainty of life.

"From all of this, I've learned to live one at a time," Matix said in a profile in last month's issue of *Mountaineer*, a Christian ministry magazine.

Matix's time ran out Friday. He died to death on a suburban street south of Miami, his lethal Ruger Mini-14 semi-automatic rifle at his side. Seven FBI agents lay dead or wounded in a broken circle around him.

Matix's partner in the suicidal fire fight was his best friend, Michael Lee Platt. Matix and Platt met in Korea as military policemen with the U.S. Army's White Rangers. They had a lot in common.

Both got married and had children. Both bought nice homes a few blocks from each other in Miami. Both lost wives to violent deaths almost exactly a year apart.

No one knows how or why they decided to become killers. Matix, 34, and Platt, 33, are now suspected of being two of the four violent bank robbers Joe D. and John G. Karpis.

Please turn to B7 for C.R.S./A



William R. Matix and
daughter, 3-year-old Melissa,
in church Facebook photo.

Unlikely robbers

had a lot in common

SUSPECTS / from 1A

robberies of armored cars or banks in the past year. They're also suspected in four murders.

"The way these two guys lived, they were family men, they had children, and they were good fathers," Metro-Dade robbery Sgt. Tony Monheim said Saturday. "When we first started working this case, we thought we would find a bunch of neo-Nazi survivalists who didn't care if they lived or died. I tell you, this was a real shock."

There have been lots of shocks for the people who knew Matix and Platt.

Doris Miller, who wrote a glowing profile of Matix in Home Life magazine, heard the news Saturday and thought it was another Bill Matix.

"Not the same William Matix," she said, stunned. "He can't be. I guess he could be. I don't know."

She had called her profile *Victory Out of Tragedy*. She said she found the FBI agents' killer "misled and very religious" when she interviewed him last year after meeting him at Riverside Baptist Church.

"I heard him give his testimony one night," Miller said. "At that time, from all appearances, he was a very sincere man. I can't look into people's hearts. I had to take his word."

A woman who dated Matix about a year ago described a gentle man who read magazines such as Christian Singe and quoted on his 3-year-old daughter.

"He used to make wooden toys for kids, little carts with wheels that rolled," the woman told The Herald on Saturday. "He kept them in a box in his house. He didn't seem like the kind of person who would go around killing people."

"What bothers me about this whole thing is this was somebody I met in church, not a bair. And when I read about this in the paper and found out it was him, it was such a shock. You just don't know who to trust. You have to be careful about people who seem normal."

The woman, who refused to give her name, said there was something odd about Matix — a seeming obsession with marrying a woman who could take the place of his dead wife.

"One of the first things he did was show me this clipping about her," said the woman. "He seemed like a normal person. The only thing was he dated a lot and he wanted to get married. He would date somebody a few times and right away want to make a commitment. I felt sorry for him. I thought he wanted to replace his wife, because he was hurt so bad."

Matix's wife, Patricia, was murdered on Dec. 30, 1983, in Columbus, Ohio.

Patricia Matix, a hospital research assistant, was bound and gagged with white adhesive tape and stabbed 16 times in the chest and neck. She was killed along with another woman in the afternoon inside the first-floor medical research laboratory at Riverside Hospital. The women's ring fingers were missing.

Police found inconsistencies in Matix's statement and followed him for a time. The murders remain unsolved.

Matix's reaction to his wife's death is described in Miller's profile.

"When the detective falteringly told me what happened, I beat the desk with my fist, scaring him to death," Miller relates, gently tapping his fist into his hand. "At home I was beating the walls in desperation. Finally, I knew I had to submit to God's presence."

In Miami, Platt's wife, Regina, died from a shotgun blast to the head in December 1984. The shooting was ruled a suicide, but investigators said Saturday that the case may be reopened.

After his wife was killed, Matix, left alone to care for the couple's 2-month-old daughter, moved to South Florida to be near his friend Platt.

His life had always seemed erratic. Immediately after high school he had joined the Marine Corps "without direction from an alcoholic, divorced father," he told Miller. After three years he joined the Army.

Because he was such a serious stutterer, the Army sent him to Walter Reed Hospital in Washington for six weeks of speech therapy. He spent every night alone in his room, practicing.

"He was taught to pronounce methodically every word slowly, increase the speed a little every week, and monitor every reverberation with the click of a counter," Miller wrote.

By the time he got to Miami, he no longer stuttered, but he was very soft-spoken.

Matix settled into a low-slung suburban house at 15615 SW 85th Ave., on a tree-lined street in an older neighborhood called Southwood. It was a nice home — three bedrooms with a screened-in pool — and he was able to hire a full-time housekeeper to take care of his daughter. He kept his lawn neat, and decorative bushes and trees show a landscaper's hand.

He was working for Platt's landscaping business, Blade Cutters Inc. Matix and Platt shared an enthusiasm for deep-sea fishing. ~~My neighbors don't recall whether either owned guns.~~

Bewildered wife

Calls slaying suspect Matix 'a master of deceit, disguise'

By MARC FISHER
Herald Staff Writer

In William Matix's suburban living room, there's an old comfy couch, a faded pastoral painting on the wall and, in the corner, a brand new grandfather clock with shiny brass fixtures — the spoils of crime.

The clock is the only remaining sign of Bill Matix's secret life, a violent life of robbery and murder that ended when Matix and partner Michael Platt killed two FBI agents and wounded five others, then died themselves. In Friday's shoot-out in

Kendall.

Wednesday, Christy Matix, estranged wife of the killer, packed his clothes into boxes and reran her mental movies of Bill and Christy, trying once more to understand what happened to the man with whom she had a child.

"There are a lot of questions that will never be answered," Christy said, sitting by the pool on the patio of the Matix home in South Dade. Near her, tossed on the patio floor, was the wooden

Please turn to WIFE/6A

Questions still linger, wife says

But calls suspect 'master of deceit'

WIFE / from 1A

sign that used to be on the front of the house: "The Matix's."

"I have the same exact questions everyone else had. How could it be? Why didn't anyone know? He was a master of deceit and disguise. Whether Bill was a born-again Christian or not, only the Lord will know. I do have some answers, though."

"When I left this house, that was something I would never have done. I didn't understand why I left. It went against everything I believe in about family and children. Now I know: The Lord took me out of here."

Christy, who married Matix last May after the two met in a church volleyball game, left him two months later. She was already pregnant. When Matix was killed, their divorce suit was nearing a trial.

Knew nothing

Like Matix's other relatives, Christy knew nothing.

Nothing about the guns. The FBI revealed Wednesday that agents found an arsenal of weapons in a closet in the Matix house.

Nothing about any robberies. Police say they are now virtually certain Matix and partner Michael Platt were responsible for the savage March 12 robbery-shooting of a man at a West Dade rock pit.

Nothing about the mental and emotional disintegration of the first man she had ever dated seriously. Christy's lawyer, John Thomson, said Wednesday that Matix came to his law offices March 12 for a deposition and acted so strangely — sharp-tempered and irrational — that Thomson prepared a request asking a judge to order a psychiatric evaluation of Matix.

"I'm probably more naive than I would have thought," Christy Matix said. "Looking back, you see things. The last time I saw Bill was Easter Sunday. I came by to force him to see the baby, a beautiful boy born in January.

Christy found a changed man. Matix was, for one thing, living with another woman, a woman who moved in with him in February and lived there until Matix was killed.

Something else seemed wrong. Matix "just flew off the handle and just got really, well, he was trying to get me upset," Christy said.

Never seen again

Christy decided she wouldn't let Matix ruin her Easter. She left. She never saw him again.

Friday morning, she drove past the Sunland Shopping Center on South Dixie Highway on her way to the hairdresser. She saw the commotion on Southwest 82nd Avenue, the police cars, the crowd. Later, she heard about the shooting and the two slain FBI agents on the radio.

"I thought, 'Those poor agents,'" Christy recalled. "That evening, I was at home. My parents were away."

About 7 p.m., a relative called to ask whether Matix's first name was William. Yes, Christy said. That's the same name as one of the men who killed the FBI agents, the relative said.

"I made a mental note to watch the Ten O'Clock News on Channel 6," she said. She watched and heard the names of her husband and Platt, his partner in a lawn-cutting business. "When I heard Mike's name, I knew it couldn't be another Bill Matix."

Christy Matix is an intelligent 30-year-old, a spunky, composed woman who was born and raised in Miami, whose life revolved around her church and her family until she met Matix.

Recent arrival

Bill Matix was a recent arrival in town, flown from Ohio to join an old military buddy in a gardening venture. He came to Florida



Bill Matix and daughter Melissa:
Matix met his wife, Christy, in a church volleyball game. She left him two months later.

with Melissa, his 2-year-old daughter, his constant reminder of his first wife Patricia's horrifying murder in December 1983. Patricia was bound, gagged and stabbed 16 times at the Columbus, Ohio, hospital where she worked. Her wedding ring was stolen. The case was never solved.

"I wasn't looking for anybody," she said. "But he kept calling the house. Nothing ever seemed right before. He seemed to have everything. His priorities were on Melissa, his home, his church and his walk with the Lord."

They prayed together. They married. Problems surfaced quickly. Christy was laid off by AT&T. Matix's partner in his gardening business told him the company was too small to support that many people. He would have to break off and start his own tree-trimming business.

His business went well. His marriage didn't.

"I always thought it was the pressure of being unemployed and having another kid coming along," Christy said.

Free-wheeling

They had rows: Christy thought Matix was a little too free-wheeling with money. As time went on, he grew more angry, but "there was never a pattern to it," Christy said. Her husband was never pleased about Christy being pregnant; Christy never understood why.

Within weeks, Christy knew Matix no longer loved her. On the third Sunday in July, she left.

When she heard Matix was dead, Christy felt little grief. "I had dealt with it," she said. "I've had 10 months to think about it. How could I be so gullible? You can't go through life questioning everything or you'll become cynical. That's what being a Christian does for you. That's the only way you can get through a situation like this and be intact."

"The Bible tells us that the wages of sin is death. It's just too bad those FBI agents had to be there, too."

In retrospect, Christy has an easy explanation for what happened. "Bill had a rough childhood, but so did my mother," she said.

Matix thrived in the Marines. "He enjoyed the regimen and control," she said. "It was pleasant for him."

Matix's daughter Melissa is with a friend. Both the Matix family in Ohio and the relatives of Matix's first wife want custody of the child.

Christy wants what only time can give her: to forget and move on. Her one regret is that "I can't afford to be a Christian mother and stay home to raise my child. That bothers me more than Bill being dead."

"I made a mistake and fortunately, I got out of it," she said. "Now every time I write a check, people see the name and look at me. When I woke up Tuesday and saw all this about Libya, I thought, great, now there'll be other news to read about. I just want it to die down."

Wednesday, Christy wore a blue T-shirt as she worked in the house where she lived with Matix. It was a joke shirt she got when she worked at AT&T. It said: "Oops! I made the wrong choice."

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(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

FBI: Suspects Hide Secret Lives Well

By Michael Carrier
and Dan Christensen

Cox News Service

MIAMI — To their friends and neighbors, William R. Matix and his family man buddy Michael Lee Platt were simply hard-working friends who ran a small landscaping business that had provided them both good homes and hopes for the future.

But, after Matix and Platt were killed in a gun battle in which two FBI agents died and five more agents were wounded Friday, a side to their lives that the two men had kept hidden began to unravel.

"I'm devastated," said one woman who lives in the same quiet cul-de-sac in the Hammocks subdivision where Platt lived with his wife and their four children for the past year. "Their poor little kids. That's who I'm hurting for."

The FBI says Matix, 35, and Platt, 32, actually were a ruthless team of armed robbers and killers suspects in a violent string of armored car and bank holdups, most of them in Kendall, and unincorporated area of 100,000 people south of Miami. The pair also are believed to have been the gunmen in two killings at a west Dade County rock pit where police say they apparently liked to fire off bursts of gunfire from automatic weapons.

Both men's homes were within a dozen miles of the street corner where they died.

Platt and his wife Brenda had lived in their rented, two-story house less than a year, according to neighbors. Police briefly sealed off an area around the home after the shooting and searched the residence, which has a for sale sign in the front yard. Police said Matix was engaged to be married.

Both men, who worked with Platt's brother Tim in a gardening company called Broad Cutters, had no criminal record, police said.

While there initially was nothing to indicate the two men were related to any revolutionary or terrorist group, the FBI's director, William Webster, said in Washington, "We are looking into that aspect very carefully."

Law enforcement officials were puzzled by the men's outward ap-

pearances as average suburbanites.

"What they did is completely out of character and abnormal to the type of lives they were leading," said Metro-Dade police robbery Sgt. Tony Monheim. "Obviously, these guys were very strange people, but their home life was normal. I don't understand it."

Also killed in the 10-minute gun battle were FBI Special Agents Benjamin T. Grogan, 53, and Jerry Dove, 30. Grogan was a 25-year FBI veteran. Dove had been an FBI agent since 1982.

A Miami banker started a fund yesterday for the families of the dead and wounded agents. Joseph Kanter, chairman of the board of Miami-based Bank of Florida, said Miami Vice star Don Johnson was the first contributor to the fund.

Grogan, a native of Brunswick, Ga., "was a friend forever," FBI agent David Jellison said. "Mr. Dove was in good company."

Grogan and his wife attended Visitation Catholic Church. A funeral Mass said by Archbishop Edward McCarthy of Miami will be held there Monday.

Five other FBI agents were wounded:

✓ Gordon McNeill, 43, a 19-year FBI veteran and supervisory agent, who was listed in serious but stable condition at Baptist Hospital in South Miami with gunshot wounds to the chest and hand;

✓ John Hanlon, 48, a 22-year veteran special agent, listed in serious but stable condition in Baptist Hospital with gunshot wounds to the hand and thigh;

✓ Edmundo Mireles, 33, a six-year veteran special agent, listed in stable condition in South Miami Hospital after being shot in the arm;

✓ Richard A. Manazzoli, 43, a 15-year veteran special agent, treated for superficial wounds at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami and released; and

✓ Gilbert Orrantia, 27, a four-year veteran special agent, treated for superficial wounds at Jackson Memorial Hospital and released.

FBI officials in Miami and Washington, including Webster, called the shootout the bloodiest incident in the

Date: 4/13/86

Edition:

THE PALM BEACH POST
PAGE 1A

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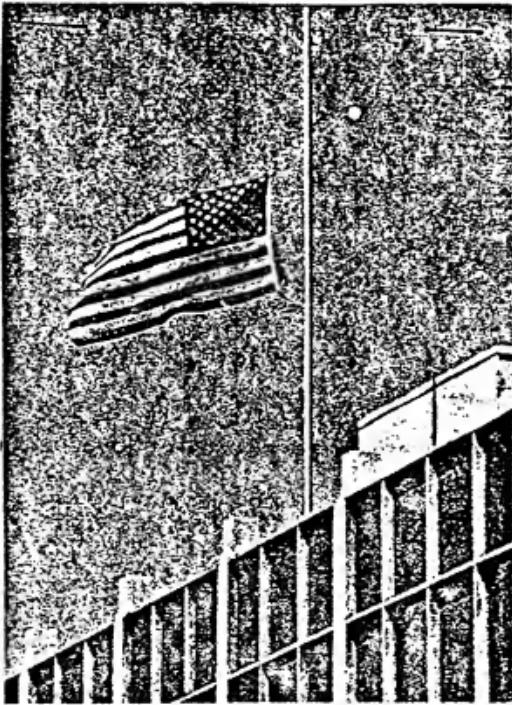
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MIAMI

Indexing:



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Miami FBI office flies flag at half-staff in wake of killings

bureau's history.

"It is difficult to recall so many agents killed and injured in a single incident," Webster said.

The incident began as a team of FBI agents were conducting "spot checks" of banks in south Dade County as part of the ongoing investigation into a half-dozen armored car and bank robberies when one agent spotted the stolen, wine-colored Chevrolet Monte Carlo the criminals were believed to be using, investigators said.

The agents had the tag number and description of the car, plus they knew many of the armed robberies had occurred on Fridays, Corless said.

Having spotted the car, the agent radioed for assistance and was quickly joined by other officers conducting spot checks in the area, Corless said. Corless said when the agents

thought enough officers had arrived to back them up, they attempted to pull the car over. Witnesses said that is when the killing gunfire erupted.

Duane Parker, a 34-year-old Cutler Ridge resident, had been driving through the area and saw the final violent minutes.

"The FBI were screaming at them to stop, and then I saw the guys jump out of the car and I heard the machine gun and I saw FBI agents falling in the street and people running back and forth," Parker said. "I thought it was Miami Vice, but I didn't see any cameras and when I saw the blood I knew I was in the wrong place."

This report was supplemented with material from The Associated Press and The New York Times News Service.

SECTION E
EDITORIALS

Never forget their courage

It was the worst shooting in the long, storied history of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Two agents brutally slain by suspected bank robbers who possessed an arsenal Al Capone would have envied. Five other agents wounded. The two suspected bank robbers dead after a wild shootout busted loose in a normally quiet neighborhood off U.S. 1 near the Dixie Belle Shopping Center.

As revealing as those details are, they do not tell the whole story of what happened last Friday morning when agents Benjamin Grogan and Gerald Dove made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. The real story is one of courage, of FBI agents risking and giving up their lives to protect the rest of us, and demonstrating again that when law enforcement officers work the streets nothing is routine.

The agents were prepared for trouble. They called in reinforcements before they pulled over the two suspects who were driving a stolen car that had been used in a robbery. But the agents could not be prepared for the weapons that awaited them or for the homicidal and suicidal nature of those who were primed to kill and ready to be killed.

Common sense and courage rode with the FBI agents last Friday morning, even if good luck did not. They made their move only after pursuing the suspects into a quiet neighborhood. After the shooting began, witnesses reported, the agents raised their guns several times as uninvolved motorists drove through the cross fire. The agents' assailants extended no such courtesies.

Before one of the agents finally succumbed, he kept lifting himself to fire at his assailants, a witness reported. Another agent who was seriously wounded, Ed Mireles, crawled to confront the killers as they sought to flee in one of the FBI vehicles, and Mireles fired the bullets that finally ended the battle.

Heroism on the job is not rare, but it is often unappreciated. In this instance the performances and the sacrifices of the agents should be deeply appreciated by all. It may appear to be small comfort to the families of Agents Grogan and Dove to be told what they had known all along: that the men they loved upheld the highest standards of their profession and lived up to the highest expectations of humanity. But that is a deep well from which relatives, friends and colleagues can draw support.

FBI Director William Webster said after the tragedy, "As in law enforcement everywhere, dedicated men and women put their lives on the line each day for all of us. This is a violent world, but it would be much worse without their fidelity, their bravery and their integrity." In few areas is that sentiment more appropriate than in Dade County.

Psychiatrists, psychologists and criminologists may never understand exactly what lay behind the actions of the killers. Though nameless and faceless to law enforcement agents before the shootout, the two men in the stolen car were suspected bank robbers, armored car robbers, even cold-blooded murderers. At the same time, as it turns out, they were considered to be family men. No one knows yet, however, whether they acted alone, or whether anyone who knew them suspected they lived other lives. The pieces of this bizarre puzzle may never fit right.

It remains baffling, too, why some motorists ignored warnings to steer clear of the area where the shootout, which lasted more than five minutes, was taking place. Perhaps it's the same inane and selfish reason that leads some motorists to ignore police or fire-rescue vehicles that are speeding down the highway with their emergency lights flashing and their sirens wailing. And the macabre curiosity that lures crowds to see and otherwise sense death is a part of mankind's makeup that runs contrary to the courage which often creates the scenes that draw the crowds.

As the community mourns for Agents Grogan and Dove, and hopes for the speedy and thorough recovery of the other wounded agents, it should also encourage the FBI and other law enforcement agencies to complete any other investigations that

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THE MIAMI NEWS Miami, FL

Page 8A

Date: BROWARD
Edition: April 14, 1986

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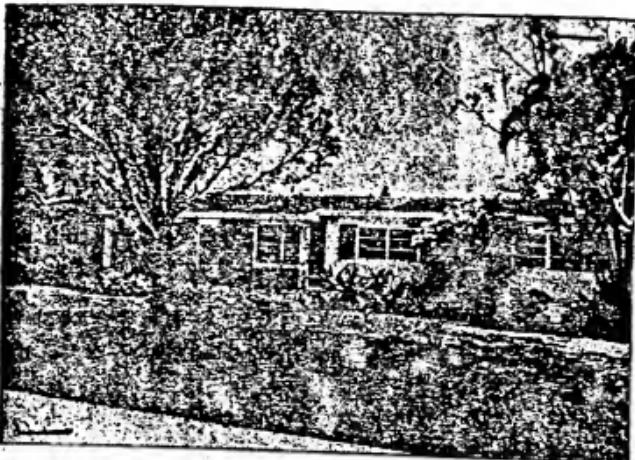
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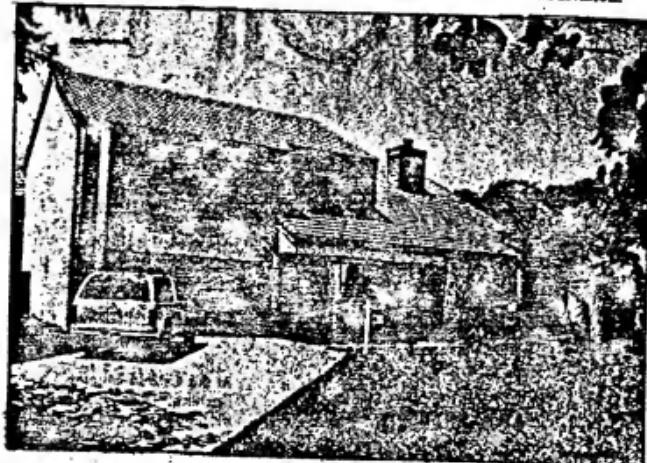
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Submitting Office: MIAMI

Indexing



William R. Matix lived at 15615 SW 85th Ave. in the Southwood subdivision.



Michael Lee Platt lived at this home at 15031 SW 85th Lane in West Kendall.

SCOTT W. AZZKENAS / Miami Herald Staff

Platt visited so often that neighbors thought he lived there.

Platt actually lived at 15031 SW 88th Lane in the Spicewood section of an upper-middle-class development called The Hammocks. Platt had lots of expensive things. Neighbors saw a chocolate-brown Jaguar, a Jeep Renegade, a white Chevy Blazer, a pickup truck and a motorcycle.

Platt's second wife, Brenda, answered the door at the house Saturday. "I'm afraid to say anything," she said, closing the door.

Neighbors said Platt and his wife lived in the house with four children.

Matix's daughter, 2-year-old Melissa, was his pride and joy, neighbors said.

"He mostly talked about his baby," said neighbor Tina Brennan. "He really loved her. He was a family man when it came to her."

Melissa went to a day nursery at Riverside Baptist Church, 10775 SW 104th St., where Matix attended services until about a year ago.

"He wouldn't smoke, he wouldn't drink. He would say grace before meals," said neighbor Helen Brennan, who once had dinner with Matix.

The woman who told The Herald about dating Matix said she met him at Riverside Baptist Church. They went out for about a

month, she said, and then the woman broke it off because she did not want to make the commitment Matix sought.

She said that Matix kept pictures of his dead wife in his South Dade home, but that he appeared somewhat detached in his attitude toward her.

"He told me about his dead wife, but it wasn't like he was still grieving," she said.

A short time later, Matix got engaged to another woman, one he had known only three weeks. The woman broke off the engagement.

Matix changed churches, joining the Wayside Baptist Church, and began dating a third woman. They were married in June.

"He came for two or three weeks and married a girl that is a member of our church," said the Rev. Charles Fant, an associate pastor at Wayside, 7701 SW 98th St. "He didn't come that much after he got married."

The marriage lasted about a month. Neighbors said the woman walked out.

"She's going through a lot of emotional trouble right now because of the marriage," said Fant, who would not reveal the woman's name. "She realizes she jumped into it and made a foolish decision. She's got a lot of wounds from it."

Herald staff writers Andres Viggiani and Dave Von Drehle contributed to this report.



VICTORY OUT OF TRAGEDY

"Hurry home," he said. But Petty never arrived.

By Doris M. Miller

WILLIAM MATIX started out
the name of the couple he
placed on the plaque during

his convalescence from
alone in his room far from family
and friends. Only 447 for the year to

Home Life magazine once featured a glowing profile of Matix.

Opposing Firepower



WILLIAM R. MATIX

Model: Ruger Mini-14
Type: Semi-automatic carbine
Speed: 40 shots per minute
Capacity: 30-round clip
Weight: 6.8 pounds
Velocity: 3,200 feet per second
Price: \$399

A "sport" version of the M-14, used
by the National Guard and 10 of the
army's regiments. Capable of accuracy up to
1,375 yards. Posses a field-carrying
system of devastating velocity. Bullet
can penetrate a car door. Has a
squeezed trigger (separately) for each
shot, unlike a machine gun. One of the
most popular rifles in South Florida.



FBI AGENTS

Model: Smith & Wesson M10
Type: Double-action revolver
Speed: 24 shots per minute
Capacity: 6-bullet cylinder
Weight: 2 pounds
Velocity: 1,100 feet per second
Price: \$258

An old reliable, 38-caliber handgun
good for run-of-the-mill police duties.
More difficult than a carbine to aim.
Effective range limited to about 50
yards. Fires much slower than the
M-14, reloads much slower and
bullets move much slower. Result
less lethal, and no match in a fire
fight.

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Congregation asks itself: Why did one of us kill?

By MARC FISHER
Herald Staff Writer

There's a revival going on this week at Riverside Baptist Church in Kendall, a fiery preacher from Atlanta in town to spread the gospel, and in the packed pews, a congregation that cannot understand what happened to one of its own.

Bill Matix, the concerned family man who was honored in a Christian magazine and the murdering thug who shot several FBI agents on a Kendall street Friday, belonged to Riverside Baptist from August 1984 until last spring.

Sunday, a pastor and his flock

took time out from their revival to come to terms with a man they thought they knew.

"We took him at face value," said Dr. Emitt Ray, a minister with a shock of white hair and serene blue eyes. "We thought William Matix was a man who needed help. We didn't know then how much he needed help."

Ray opened his sermon with a short but emotional discussion of the man who had come to the church regularly, a man who had joined the singles Sunday School and dated several members of the

Please turn to CHURCH / 7A

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

THE MIAMI HERALD

Miami, Florida

Page 1A

Date

April 14, 1986

Title

Character

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Classification

Submitting Office

MIAMI

Indexing

A stunned church struggles to understand why

CHURCH / from LA

congregation.

His voice trembling, eyes tearing, Ray told more than 600 people that a church "must still reach out to anyone who needs help from Jesus. We believe there are forces at work in this community. We believe they are trying to destroy Miami because it is such a great mission field — a city of castaways and immigrants."

Riverside, at 10775 SW 104th

St., is a large, modern church in a comfortable part of town, but its members are not fancy people. They do not wear the latest fashions on a Sunday. They don't hesitate to hold the hands of a stranger when they sing a hymn.

Under a soaring roof, enclosed by warm wood paneling and a splash of rich color in the stained glass behind the choir, they stepped forward to ask their minister to make sense of William Matix.

"What was his motive?" a beavest man asked Ray. "Why did he come here?"

"I don't know what his motives were," the pastor replied. "He came pretty regular and tried to date all our single girls. Within a couple of months, he tried to marry three different ones."

As services came to a close Sunday, a Channel 4 television crew burst in, lights shining. Ray ordered them outside: "We're still trying to have a church here."

To many in the congregation, the presence of the TV crew meant that they had been found guilty by association.

They shook their heads over the irony: A good many members of Riverside Baptist are law enforcement agents. Highway Patrol, Metro police, Drug Enforcement Administration, Coast Guard and FBI — indeed, two special agents are deacons at Riverside.

Twenty miles north, at the church where Special Agent Benjamin Grogan was a parishioner, emotions were simpler — shock and grief over a crime that could not be excused.

Grogan, one of two FBI men slain in Friday's shoot-out, was a regular figure at the 10 a.m. Mass at Visitation Catholic Church.

"The only thing we can do is take every person at face value and then feel great loss when something like this happens."

Dr. Emitt Ray,
Riverside pastor

19100 N. Miami Ave.

Sunday, pastor Brendan Dalton spoke of the agent's strong faith and love for his family.

"We prayed for him today, the whole parish prayed," the priest said. "I told them that he lived his Christian faith and that he was a good man. Afterward, the parishioners said it seemed very unjust and unfair that a good man who gave all his life to protecting others should be shot down this way."

At Riverside, Ray said his religion required that he not pass judgment on William Matix.

The pastor recalled that Matix had come to see him several times to talk of his grief over the murder of his first wife in Columbus, Ohio. On Dec. 30, 1983, Patricia Matix was bound and gagged with adhesive tape, then stabbed 16 times in the chest and neck.

"I had long conversations with him over his sense of loss for his wife and concern for his child," Ray said. "He never shared with me any deeper concerns."

"This kind of thing happens more often than you'd wish. Church is a very vulnerable institution because this is a place where people come a hurting. The only thing we can do is take every person at face value and then feel great loss when something like this happens."

Matix played on Riverside's Friday night volleyball team for singles. One night last spring, Matix and the Riverside squad went to play the singles at Wayside Baptist Church, 2701 SW 96th St.